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ABSTRACT

The Scottish Discussion Skills Project, conceived in 1981, is described in this booklet. Following an introduction that explains the context of the project, the booklet provides a summary of four educational reports that were the basis for the project, and defines the concept of discussion. The remainder of the booklet is divided into two parts. The first explores the teacher's role in discussion and how to understand the group experience, while the second describes how a learner develops discussion skills, a pilot program for learning to discuss, how to understand the silent member of the group, and the activities of teachers who become associates of the Discussion Development Group. Appendixes contain a student questionnaire concerning discussion attitudes, and a list of persons involved with the Discussion Development Group. (DF)

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Learning to Discuss

by

Eileen Francis

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SCDS, on behalf of the CCC, maintains a programme of curriculum development in collaboration with a variety of other agencies and publishes reports and other information on this activity.

This publication originates in the programme of research and development undertaken as part of the government's Munn and Dunning Development Programme, in which the CCC is a partner. The research and development work were undertaken at the Speech Unit in Moray House College of Education.

SCDS, Edinburgh Centre, is happy to be associated with Moray House College in this publication.

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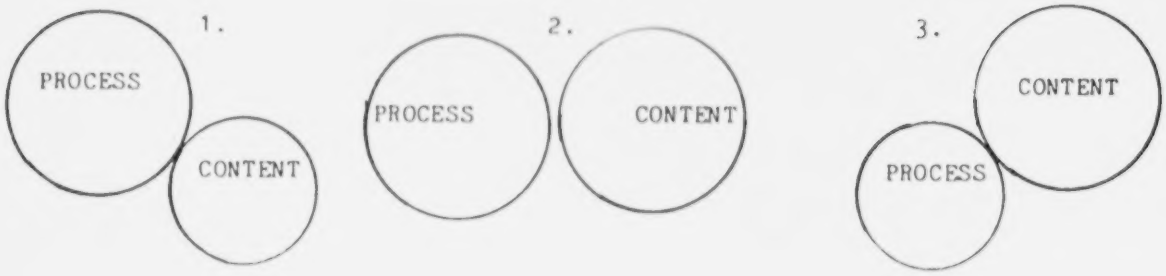
Errata

P.9 Circles omitted from diagram

The progression can be represented as follows:



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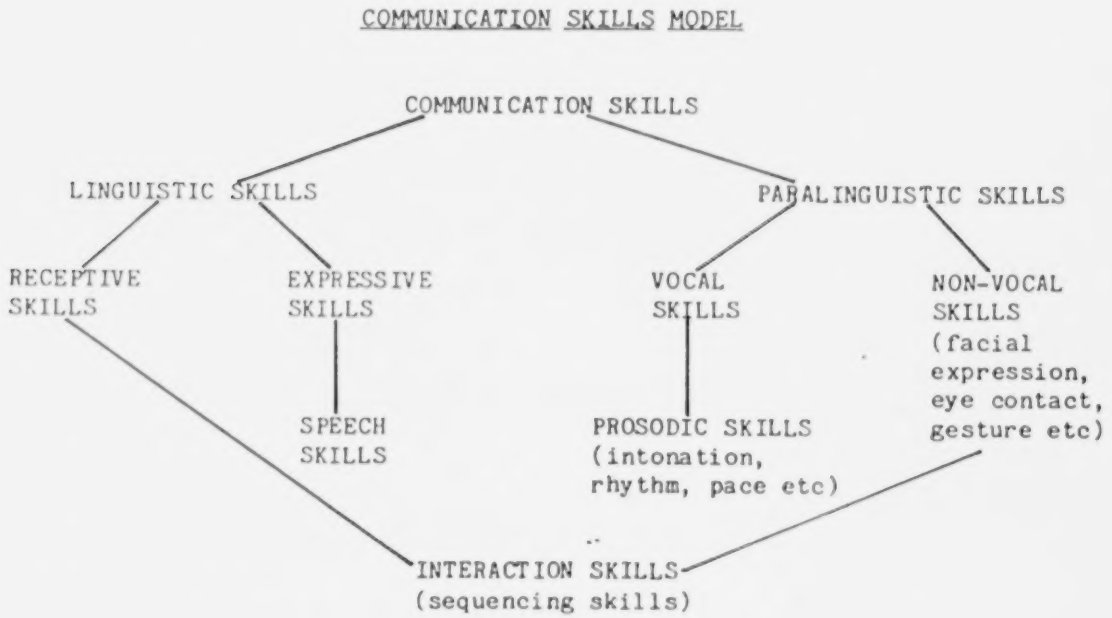

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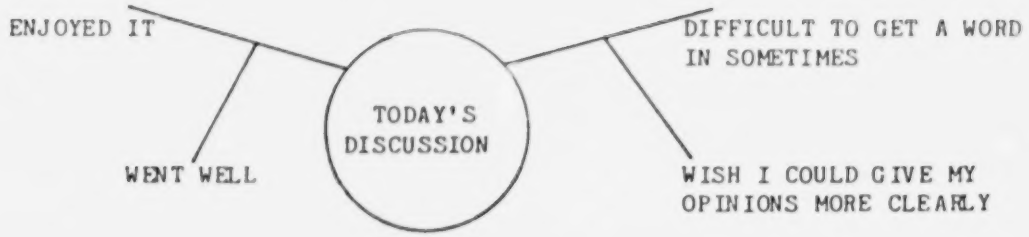

LEARNING TO DISCUSS

	Page No.
INTRODUCTION	1
THE CONTEXT	3
THE CONCEPT OF DISCUSSION	7
PART I	
THE TEACHER'S ROLE IN DISCUSSION - A PERSON-CENTRED APPROACH TO DISCUSSION GROUP LEADERSHIP	11
UNDERSTANDING THE GROUP EXPERIENCE	17
PART II	
THE LEARNER - DEVELOPING DISCUSSION SKILLS	26
LEARNING TO DISCUSS: A PILOT PROGRAMME	34
UNDERSTANDING THE SILENT MEMBER OF THE GROUP	66
THE ASSOCIATES' GROUP	69

INTRODUCTION

The Discussion Skills Project was conceived in January 1981 in response to an initiative from the Scottish Education Department. Originally the idea was to commission the design of a 'discussion skills package' which could be used by teachers alongside the newly structured curriculum generated by the government's development programme. During initial discussions, however, it was agreed that while the project in its later stages would address itself to the compilation of a discussion skills package, it would regard the task of exploring the feelings teachers have concerning discussion group management as being of equal importance. An in-service training programme would therefore be devised to consider the problems both teachers and students experience in relation to classroom discussion.

The first phase of the project aimed to help teachers identify and analyse discussion group processes and to develop their own skills in discussion group management. The second phase of the project focussed on the implementation of techniques which would facilitate student-group participation in the classroom.

A report of the work of the project group was first published in 1982. The title 'Learning to Discuss' was not chosen arbitrarily; the project group realised that advocacy for a curriculum which placed more emphasis on learning through discussion, did not sufficiently take into account the complexity of the issues surrounding discussion group management. We suggest that many teachers and students insufficiently understand the concepts underlying the development of oral communication, concepts which underpin any examination of the process of group interaction. We are convinced that it is necessary for teachers to consider the introduction of developmental programmes to encourage the acquisition of discussion skills, before the expectation of learning through discussion can be fulfilled. We believe that focussing on the process of learning to discuss will help both students and teachers to become more aware of the reality of when a classroom discussion <u>is</u> a discussion, rather than a synchronized ritual of teacher/student talk.

In 1982, as a result of recommendations contained in the project's report, Moray House Research and Development Committee sponsored the establishment of the Discussion Development Group, a resource centre for the dissemination of information and training on discussion management.

During 1983-86 the DDG has received a grant from the Scottish Education Department to evaluate the effectiveness of the DDG in creating a discussion network throughout Scotland of lecturers, advisers and teacher associates, and to monitor the quality of the consultancy support offered by the project team.

We hope that this new version of 'Learning to Discuss' will encourage teachers to enter into a dialogue with the DDG and its network of Scottish contacts, to promote further research and development on the topic of classroom discussion.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

'Learning to Discuss' could not have been completed without the ideas, co-operation and understanding of the first group of teacher associates. I wish to record my thanks to Eleanor Bain, John Broadfoot, Bill Gibbons, David Griffiths, Elizabeth Herd, Tom Johnson and Alison McKinley for their participation in the project group 1981-82.

My thanks also to William Nichol, now retired from SED, and Dr Sally Brown for initiating the project, and to Jane Davidson, my research associate, for her support and encouragement.

Eileen Francis
Co-ordinator: DDG
July 1985

THE CONTEXT

The context for the project on discussion skills is provided by the content of four major educational reports published since 1975:

A Language for Life: The Bullock Report (HMSO 1975)

Truancy and Indiscipline in Schools in Scotland: The Pack Report (HMSO 1977)

The Structure of the Curriculum in the Third and Fourth Years of the Scottish Secondary School (HMSO 1977)

Assessment for All (HMSO 1977)

All the reports either explicitly or implicitly ask for more attention to be paid to the communication process in the classroom. All suggest that education in the secondary school is not fulfilling the expectations of the less able students, who are most at risk in a system which they often perceive as alienating and out of touch with reality.

1) A LANGUAGE FOR LIFE: The Bullock Report (HMSO 1975)

The Bullock Report has specific comment to make about discussion in the classroom. It describes discussion in small groups as an opportunity to explore and illuminate a subject. Discussions should not be contrived, there should be genuine contact with reality. Discussion topics should emerge from the structure of the curriculum, rather than be imposed upon it. The aim should be to go further than a mere exchange of prejudices or a restatement of inflexible points of view. The purpose of the discussion should be to move away from a position of relentlessly driving home one's personal opinions, to arrive at a position of sharing insights with members of the group, appreciating that everyone's perception is valid, to reach a synthesis of views which might then be shared by the whole class.

The teacher should aim to develop his skills as a listener, allowing his genuine interest in the process of discussion to act as a stimulus to the student group.

Bullock admits however, that while more discussion is taking place in the classroom, many discussions fall far short of these criteria. The teacher, by selecting a topic for discussion, too often places the students in a non-initiating role, so that the artificiality of the situation is highlighted. The students react to this air of contrivance by becoming aware that the teacher knows what they are likely to say and is therefore in the position of being able to assess the relative value of their contributions to the discussion. Some students collude with the teacher in this artificial situation by trying to guess what the teacher has in mind. Their efforts during the discussion are focussed on "a number of disconnected endeavours to read the teacher's mind", rather than a teasing out of the substance of the discussion topic. Not surprisingly, many students became disheartened by being asked to play this ritual game. They decide they have more to gain through remaining silent than by attempting to make an appropriate contribution. The teacher may respond to this inactivity by generating a number of "open" questions as a stimulus. Very often such

questioning is not open-ended at all, the questions imply an answer, and the tone of voice used by the teacher conveys the impression that the answer will be evaluated on the basis of its appropriateness to the development of the discussion.

2) TRUANCY AND INDISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS: The Pack Report (HMSO 1977)

The Pack Report demonstrates from the Scottish situation how failure to attend to the problems of the communication process, as described by Bullock, can rebound, affecting students' attitudes to the whole learning process. The student with real or perceived communication difficulties embarking on secondary education will fail to cope and without expert help or support may join the group of students who describe education as 'boring' and 'irrelevant'.

Students tend to see schools in terms of a network of personal and social relationships in contrast to the perception of many teachers who view school as the place where one develops cognitive abilities. The student has an expectation that the school will respond to his emotional and social needs and when it fails to do so his attitudes become hardened against a system that has failed him.

The Discussion Skills Project group felt that it was important to keep the content of the Pack Report in the forefront of the debate concerning the government's development programme. The evidence of Bullock and Pack suggest that there is a need for a corresponding amount of attention to be focussed on the process of the curriculum as on the structure of the curriculum. We consider that a proper attention to process can only be achieved by teacher training programmes which emphasize the development of observation and perception skills in their students, and an on-going concern with the teacher's capacity to demonstrate insight and empathy towards the individual needs of pupils.

3) THE STRUCTURE OF THE CURRICULUM IN THE THIRD AND FOURTH YEARS OF THE SCOTTISH SECONDARY SCHOOL: The Munn Report (HMSO 1977)

The Munn Report gives the impression that the concerns of the Bullock and Pack Reports are its concerns too. The Report redefines the aims and objectives of the Scottish secondary school curriculum and grapples with the problem of achieving a shift in emphasis from a curriculum biased towards cognitive development, to a curriculum with a more holistic view which places academic attainment in the context of social and affective development.

Educationists should now be concerned with the concept of social competence and the development of a range of basic academic, social and practical skills which will develop the motivation and confidence of students. The present structure of the curriculum is seen not to respond sufficiently to the needs of the less able students with a resulting loss of motivation and sustained interest in the learning process.

The nature and quality of the educational experience is in need of re-vitalisation with "every teacher in effect becoming a teacher of social education" (Kirk 1981). Educationists are being asked to consider to what extent patterns of authority in school, the attitudes of the

teacher to the meaning of the curriculum, and the teacher/student relationship must be transformed, if these newly defined goals are to be attained.

The Discussion Skills Project addresses itself to these goals at the micro-level, specifically examining perceived authority roles in the discussion process, investigating feelings and attitudes of teachers to discussion, and providing guidelines for experiments with discussion in the classroom.

We note that many of the new curriculum programmes being devised at present place an emphasis on "learning through discussion" and while we applaud the aims and objectives of the new curriculum, we query the assumption that a newly structured curriculum will wholly resolve the alienation that many students experience in secondary school, unless the curriculum makes explicit the stages of development through which students must progress before a goal such as "learning through discussion" can be achieved. Teachers must be fully aware of the communication and group processes which influence the implementation of the new curriculum. Failure to attend to these issues may cause teachers undue stress as they perceive the curriculum making unrealistic demands on their skills.

4) ASSESSMENT FOR ALL (HMSO 1977)

The Dunning Report which accompanied the Munn Report in 1977 for consideration by the Secretary of State for Scotland, perhaps prescribes the framework for coping with the stress teachers will experience when they implement the new curriculum. The Report has created considerable activity in broadening the scope of assessment to include diagnostic assessment which describes the base-line from which a student approaches a field of study. It also considers assessment which encompasses affective characteristics, practical skills and social competence as well as academic attainment.

To accomplish such holistic assessment teachers will need to develop new skills in the observation and analysis of communication behaviour, adopting behavioural assessments currently used by other professionals such as psychologists, to their own needs.

Teachers will also need to consider what part the pupil can play in assessment by examining the self-assessment techniques which are available. It is perhaps through such a process of self-analysis that the motivation and the confidence of students in the learning process will be increased.

Within the conceptual framework provided by appropriate diagnostic assessment the teacher should feel more secure when implementing new programmes of study. We suggest that the work of the project will be of value to teachers in defining the elements of discussion, the process of development towards discussion skill and the typical problems which emerge in discussion situations. We will offer a range of assessment procedures to complement those being made available from other sources.

THE DISCUSSION SKILLS PROJECT

The evidence collated from these four reports provided the starting point for our project. The potential of discussion as a mainstream element of the curriculum; discussion as a means of validating the educational process for less able students; discussion as a method of assessing learning and social competence. What follows is a report of our work presented in two parts:

Part I describes issues of importance to the teacher as leader of a group, Part II examines the way in which teachers can apply their acquired knowledge of group processes to the school situation.

REFERENCES

1975 A Language for Life: The Bullock Report, HMSO.

1977 Truancy and Indiscipline in Schools in Scotland: The Pack Report, HMSO.

1977 The Structure of the Curriculum in the Third and Fourth Years of the Scottish Secondary School: The Munn Report, HMSO.

1977 Assessment for All: The Dunning Report, HMSO.

Kirk, G (1981) Curriculum and Assessment in the Scottish Secondary School: A Study of the Munn and Dunning Reports. Ward Lock Educational.

THE CONCEPT OF DISCUSSION

What is a discussion?

We use Bridges (1981) text on "Education, Democracy and Discussion" to answer the group's question: When is a discussion a discussion and when is it a blether?

Discussion is usually, but not always, group talk involving a number of people. In a discussion more than one point of view will be put forward on a subject. Discussion is always discussion of, about, or on something.

Discussion requires those engaged in it to be prepared to examine and be responsive to the different points of view put forward.

Participants in discussion are assumed to be willing to try to understand, to examine or to be affected by opinions other than their own. There is no point to a discussion if the participants are unwilling to consider a different perspective.

Participants in a discussion have an obligation to both offer opinions and to examine the opinions of others. To sit in silence fulfils only the listening, observing part of the contact. There must be give and take in discussion.

Participants in discussion are required to be reasonable, but not wholly rational. The insights to be gained from intuitive contributions and from the examination of irrational feelings should be regarded as equally valuable to a discussion.

DISCUSSION IN THE CLASSROOM

It is necessary to be clear about what kind of discussion is being aimed for in the classroom. The discussion may involve either a small group of not more than 15 members, including the teacher, or a larger group divided into sub-groups of not more than six members working alongside each other. We recognise the problems teachers have in being timetabled for work in the desirable small group setting and consider teachers should continue to make representations about this.

The teacher's role is in fact a duality of roles. (S)he should be, the conductor - organising, coordinating and preparing students for participation in the discussion activity, and (s)he should also be a process consultant, conducting a discussion about the discussion when the task is completed. In this role (s)he will facilitate the giving and receiving of feedback on the effectiveness of the discussion process and its appropriateness to the task, identifying problems which might be managed differently in future discussions.

These roles require the teacher to step to one side of the actual discussion process to allow the students themselves to manage the task of discussion.

We are aware that in many classrooms teachers are far more interventionist than this when it comes to discussion and that the discussion too easily can become a highly sophisticated question and answer session. Sometimes

it is difficult for the teacher to stand back and analyse the effectiveness of a discussion because (s)he has been so much engaged in creating the Socratic dialogue. (S)he may delude himself that (s)he is facilitating the group talk, that nothing would happen if (s)he did not intervene. This is the teacher as conductor in an inappropriate sense, fully in control of all the voices, keeping time, drawing out those who cannot be heard, encouraging the dependency of the group.

THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDY OF DISCUSSION

The work of Dillon (1982) has reinforced our view that teacher questioning* related to the content of discussion is unhelpful and should be avoided. Dillon examines the literature on questioning and presents theoretical evidence from philosophy, linguistics and cognitive psychology, empirical evidence from social anthropology and sociolinguistics, and practical evidence from education, psychotherapy and counselling. He examines how evidence from such a multidisciplinary field has been utilised in education, concluding that teacher questioning is often the reverse of practice in other fields. He tells us that lawyers use questioning to limit thought and response in a witness, whereas teachers use it with the purpose of enhancing thought. Psychotherapists use questions sparingly because cognitive and expressive processes are regarded as being facilitated by the technique of using declarative statements or the strategy of deliberate silence. Questions tend to restrict interaction, circumscribing responses and encouraging passivity.

Dillon finds that "teacher questioning constitutes the reverse of the logician's standard question situation ... whereas a questioner would be presumed not to know the answer and think the respondent knows it, a teacher is presumed to know the answer and think the student might not. Whereas a questioner would ask out of a desire and need to know, it is foregone that the teacher does not need to know the answer, but imputes to the student the need to know, even if not knowing the answer".

We highlight the particular problem of the educationist, the problem of managing a host of insights from many disciplines to provide the framework for educational practice. Insights from cognitive and social psychology, sociology and the philosophy of education often fail to be realised in classroom practice.

In 1983 the DDG was invited to participate in an international multidisciplinary research study on classroom questioning and discussion organised by Dillon. The study was based on the analysis of five transcripts of classroom discussions in the USA. The findings of the study were presented at the annual conference of the American Educational Research Association in Chicago in 1985. A forthcoming text containing contributions from this international group will include the DDG's perspective on the application of group analysis to classroom discussion.

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* The literature on questioning is considerable. It is worthy of more attention than can be given here. The DDG has found Dillon (1982 et al), Rudduck (1978) and Sigel (1979 et al) particularly helpful. Questionnaires based on their work are available from the DDG.

DESIGNING THE DISCUSSION PROGRAMME

At an early stage we considered literature from the Centre for Applied Research in Education at the University of East Anglia as it provided evidence of a long term discussion project in the United Kingdom. We examined the text and audio recordings from the project to test out our own theories and observations on discussion skills development. We concluded that management of this resource material posed teachers with a conflict of interests which they would find difficult to resolve. At one and the same time the teachers were asked to experiment with a curriculum radically different in content from anything previously presented to the student, in a communication style which bore no resemblance to the more familiar didactic teaching style. The teachers were set the task of encouraging "rationality, sensitivity, imaginativeness and tolerance" in the discussion group, bearing in mind that they were 'neutral leaders' whose own values and attitudes must not be allowed to interfere with the discussion process.

The teachers were also aware that they were the guardians of a collection of documentary evidence to which the students required access if they were to inform themselves on the topic under discussion.

To complicate the situation the teachers in many cases approached their new role carrying with them the remnants of the old roles of authoritarian manager and information giver. Even if they consciously attempted to discard the old roles, the expectations of the students made it difficult to do so, as the traditional role can be experienced as familiar and comforting even though there may be no great affection for it.

The vision of such curriculum developers is impressive if the strands of 'learning through discussion' can be separated into more manageable goals so that the teacher does not feel flooded by a host of process and content issues. Mindful of this the system of goals with the DDG recommends separates the process from the content issues in the discussion programme and, as we have observed, examines the process skills of the teacher before attending to the process skills of the student. We are of the opinion that when both students and teacher have resolved their problems with the process skills then, and only then, are they sufficiently free to progress to a content-orientated programme.

The progression can be represented as follows:

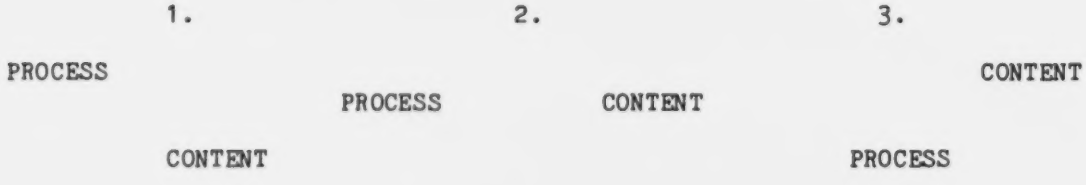

Diagram 1 represents a discussion situation where the content is trivial, being used as a mechanism to illustrate a process rather than having any validity of its own.

Diagram 2 represents the situation in which the group is aware of the process described above, has practised it and will attempt to use it in relation to a topic relevant to the programme of work e.g. discussion of a text or of a social issue. Time is allocated at the end of the session to analyse the process of the discussion and how it was managed, so that in this case equal time has been spent on content and process.

Diagram 3 represents the final stage when the content of the discussion is seen as the most important element. The process skills have been well learned and may not be referred to unless the task of managing a particular discussion proves difficult.

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PART I

THE TEACHER'S ROLE IN DISCUSSION - A PERSON-CENTRED APPROACH TO DISCUSSION GROUP LEADERSHIP

THE TEACHER'S ROLE IN DISCUSSION - A PERSON-CENTRED APPROACH TO DISCUSSION GROUP LEADERSHIP

The 'person-centred' approach and the 'skills-centred' approach are the models of training most appropriate to teachers wishing to develop their ability in discussion group management. We combine the two approaches emphasising a person-centred approach initially, so that awareness of the group as a social system, the processes which shape the group and the development of empathy through insight, are the goals of the teachers' groups when working with each other. Later, a skills-centred approach becomes more important as the associates try out strategies with student groups.

School-based programmes are organised to follow on from the college-based programme. Teachers are responsible for designing their own discussion projects for the school-based programme. (cf Johnson 1985, Hunter and Pratt 1984), and have access to the project team as consultants.

Resource papers, audio and video recordings and programme materials available from the Discussion Development Group provide a conceptual framework and exemplars for work in school. These resources have recently been disseminated more widely to lecturers and advisers in other regions of Scotland who have joined the DDG network.

THE PERSON-CENTRED PROGRAMME

The aim of the participant involved in training is to promote understanding of themselves and others in the context of a group. The task of the group is to discuss communication and group processes which influence the interactions of the group members. It is not the task of the training group to become involved in discussions which have no bearing on the members' professional roles.

It is not possible to create a comparable learning experience by presenting information on communication and group processes didactically, or by containing the group experience in one session. Experiential learning takes time as the reflective element is vital. Members need time to participate, time to reflect on their participation followed by sessions in which the group can share each others' reflections.

The leader's role in the group is that of process consultant i.e. the person who describes and makes links between the communication processes of the group and its social system. The use of declarative statements which reflect what is happening in the group and the use of silence, promotes the maximum creativity of the group members.

It is usual for the following basic issues to emerge during a programme of group work and for group members to become familiar with the concepts associated with each issue:

1) leadership style - the differences between conducting and leading - the comparison with other teaching styles - the attributes of the participant observer role;

2) the group as a system;

3) the effects of group composition on the work of the group;

4) the need for stable but flexible boundaries in group discussion;

5) the modelling of desirable group behaviour;

6) managing the process of dependence in the small group;

7) allowing the group to work on authority issues;

8) promoting group cohesiveness - inclining towards group inter-dependence;

9) diagnosing group processes.

A full description of the concepts on which our programme is based is contained in Bramley (1979). The concepts are derived from group work in different settings from our own, and needed to be reinterpreted from the point of view of the teacher. Texts we find most helpful are Bion (1961) and Foulkes (1975). We examine here the application of some of the most important concepts to a group of teachers.

1. Leading and Conducting

Before embarking on small group work in the secondary school it is necessary for teachers to consider how discussion group leadership differs from leadership in other teaching situations. The teacher must recognise that it is inappropriate to transfer a teaching style from other classroom situations directly into the small group without reflecting on the impact of this leadership style. Teachers must come to terms with the qualitative difference between 'conducting' a group and leading a group of students.

2. The Group as a Social System

A cohesive group has more strength to reflect on its own progress as an emerging social system than a random collection of individuals gathered together with differing perceptions of the group's purpose.

The trend of focussing on students' individual needs has perhaps obscured the learning opportunities available in working from a class group perspective. Allowing students to observe and discuss the roles they adopt in the class group and their feelings in relation to the allocation of these roles, can enable them to view their strengths and weaknesses in a social context.

The project group has become aware of a body of knowledge made available by group analysts which they consider has not been fully utilised by the education profession. At present this body of knowledge may not directly translate into the classroom setting, but it is agreed that the literature should be considered by teachers and efforts to apply the concepts to student groups are welcomed.

3. Setting Boundaries

It is the teacher's responsibility to establish stable but flexible boundaries for group interaction. (S)he has the authority to define

the task the class is to be engaged upon and to suggest the procedures to accomplish the task, communicating an atmosphere of stability and security in doing so.

The boundaries are often defined prior to meeting with students. Principal Teachers, for example, plan with their colleagues the management of the syllabus, staff plan the components of the lesson. Teachers are used to walking into a classroom with a view of the aims and objectives to be achieved during each period.

It is not our intention to challenge this approach but to comment on the fact that there is a tendency to create inflexible boundaries through this methodology which denies the student creativity in the learning role.

4. Modelling Appropriate Group Behaviour

If the previous paragraph suggests that the teacher by creating more responsible activity for the student group is reducing his own level of activity, this would be a false assumption. In fact the opportunities are increased for structured observation of student progress and for thoughtful, facilitative intervention. The teacher's efforts should focus more on the attributes of sensitive listening and the giving of appropriate feedback - the responding rather than the initiating role. Consequently the tendency for "lion-taming", as Hargreaves (1972) described it, will be greatly reduced and the emergence of the persona of the 'caring' teacher is more probable.

It is often a striking feature of college inservice work that the teacher who appears to have a mastery of the concepts of the caring teacher presents quite a different persona to students. We observe this ourselves in the project groups. There is no doubt that teachers are committed to the ideas generated by the project, are concerned about the lack of real implementation of these ideas in the educational system, and are willing to make considerable efforts to examine their own performance as teachers in the light of these concepts. Even so, much of the video analysis indicates that the habits of the didactic teaching role are difficult to eradicate. It is possible to 'teach' discussion (in a highly structured manner) as a set of prepared topics. Of course, by doing this the teacher models inappropriate group behaviour which invalidates the content of the programme. We hope the resource material will not be misused in this way.

5. Dependence, Independence and Interdependence

The work of the project group is designed to challenge the 'closed system' approach which operates in many classrooms where teachers have clear ideas of their intentions but students are less clear about the teacher's purpose. This situation inevitably promotes feelings of powerlessness in students and leads them to express their feelings at best in dependence on the teacher's actions or at worst in alienation from school activities. Indicators that the teacher has unwittingly fostered a dependency dynamic in the classroom can be seen in questioning situations where the student has the expectation that the teacher knows all the answers - situations in which the teacher feels growing irritation with silent students who do not contribute, or with classes apathetic to teasing out the substance of a lesson.

At times it is appropriate to be dependent in a learning situation when the teacher is demonstrating skills which the student's have not yet mastered. However, it is interesting that the more inappropriately dependent the group has been encouraged to become through past experience of a closed system, the more resistant it is to taking opportunities to acquire new skills when the occasion offers itself. Examples of this can be found in in-service training groups as well as in student groups, when teachers are asked to work on an initiative which has not yet been fully conceptualised by the trainer and which requires original research by the teacher in the classroom.

The aim of every group leader should be to discuss the difficulties presented by the closed system and the attributes of the open system where independence, "feeling your own authority" and "self-actualisation" (to use words which others have used to express the concept) are fostered. The ultimate aim is for the students' group or teachers' group to come to the conclusion that their groups are interdependent and that the dynamics of appropriate dependence and independence are part of interdependence. Each group member should be regarded as being in possession of perceptions which can illuminate the whole group process. The group as a social system is poorer if it depends on the contributions of a few of its members rather than taking advantage of contributions from <u>all</u> its members. We believe that the effect on working parties, boards of studies and teachers' management groups would be revelatory if such a concept was taken seriously.

6. <u>The Role of the Participant-Observer and the Group Diagnostician</u>

It is necessary for teachers to remember that they need not always be cast in the role of "leader" of the group. They can take on other roles too, such as that of participant-observer responding to the leadership of members of the student group, for example, in choosing a discussion topic. The participant-observer role requires the teacher to remain sufficiently detached and objective to contribute to an analysis of what is happening in the class group. Involvement in the <u>content</u> of the discussion would face the teacher with conflicts which are unhelpful to the student. For example, how open can teachers be about their own views on emotional, social and political issues? Conflicts such as this distract the teacher from fulfilling the primary task of the participant-observer role which is to enable students to attend to the <u>process</u> of the discussion so that they can learn to be more effective discussants.

The teacher who adopts the participant-observer role is aware that all of us have a tendency to project our own feelings into group situations and must work hard to become aware of this tendency. An angry teacher may mean an angry group - an anxious teacher an anxious group. There may be little we can do to resolve the angry response to a difficult situation or our own current anxieties, nevertheless we have the obligation as professional workers to learn to manage such feelings so that they do not contaminate our work.

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UNDERSTANDING THE GROUP EXPERIENCE

INTRODUCTION

The preliminary draft of this paper was presented to the project group in January 1981. It was based on notes made by the project leader after each group meeting in the autumn term and is presented in its final form after two sessions with the project group to debate its contents.

PROCESS THINKING

The aim of the paper is to provide a description of the processes which shaped the group experience, taking into account the differences in perception and interpretation of individual members.

Process thinking is important to successful group leadership and the aim of the experiential group was to highlight and to demonstrate the way in which this skill could be acquired. During the group experience our major task has been to help each other to become more aware of the factors which have shaped our discussions.

PROCESS SHAPERS

1. Group Composition

   The group settled around an average attendance of six members, including the group leader. This has proved to be an effective number for the kind of discussion in which we have been engaged. We could have achieved similar goals had the number been increased to between eight and ten members, beyond this figure we would have found it more difficult to pursue the individual explorations which were seen to be important.

   The equal balance of men and women and of the subject groups (Modern Studies and English) where content and process seemed to have more, rather than less, in common, also facilitated the group process.

   One aspect of group composition which at first sight may have appeared to inhibit our group process was the discrepancy of experience which existed among the members, for example heads of departments with staff management responsibilities working with a relatively newly qualified teacher. However, as we saw, background experience and status were not significant elements in the group discussion. Of more importance was the desire to be open, with an eagerness to share ideas with others and a voluntary commitment to the life of the group.

2. Boundaries

   'Boundary maintenance' is an important concept in the analysis of group process. Any group experience must be examined in terms of the management of the task the group sets out to fulfil. At a concrete level boundaries of time and place need to be set in advance to accommodate the needs of the group members. Our original schedule of a meeting from 3.00 - 5.00 pm proved to be unworkable as the registered teachers involved were not able to rearrange their timetables to attend

the project group meetings. The enforced change of time from 4.30 - 6.00 pm was obviously fatiguing and caused pressure on motivation. The distance to be travelled by some members of the group after a day's teaching was also appreciated as being burdensome. The physical setting for the meetings had therefore to be designed to compensate for these negative effects - comfortable seating, a stable seating arrangement, the availability of coffee and a consistent beginning and ending time proved to be mitigating factors. It was commented on more than once that the setting provided a striking contrast to the unsuitable classroom settings in which teachers are often asked to do group-work. Fixed desks and chairs in rooms where there is only one possible seating arrangement, were mentioned as constraints on effective discussion group-work, as was the sometimes inflexible time boundary of 40 minutes.

At a less tangible level there was the boundary of the shared precept, or the notions with which the group must work to accomplish its task. Ideally management of the group experience should allow for flexibility so that the boundaries of the discussion can shrink or expand to accommodate aspects of the task which emerge as significant areas for consideration.

We spent much of the first three or four sessions negotiating what might be the shared precepts of the group on the topic of discussion skills and the notions which the group felt we needed to consider. The majority of the group were willing to collaborate around the themes suggested in the introductory paper:

exploration of self as a member of a group

self as a group leader

observation of the group's progress towards cohesiveness and effectiveness in discussion.

These could be described as the <u>content</u> themes for the ten weekly meetings.

As the group's work developed the content themes were teased out to include discussion on group composition, seating arrangements and their effect on group management, the issue of silence in pupil group discussion and styles of questioning adopted by the group leader. The boundary was also expanded to include not only discussion on the content themes but to address the process issues surrounding each of these topics:

eg. "How do I <u>feel</u> about the arrangements made for discussion in my school?"

"When a child is silent <u>how does this affect</u> my behaviour?"

The group came to realise that consideration of the process issues was of paramount importance in developing effective discussion skills and came to the conclusion that active listening and the ability to reflect on the feelings and opinions each individual brought to the group was the nub of the group experience.

While the majority of the members of the group found this expansion of the boundary to be liberating it was helpful also to have as a group member someone who found it to be constraining. His view was that the cognitive experience in which we were engaged was incompatible with his own personal preference for a purely skills-orientated approach to discussion. This challenge to the task around which the group was focussing helped to achieve a balance between attention to the content and process issues surrounding discussion groups in schools and demonstrated very clearly the problem of achieving the integration of the dominant process features of therapeutic group-work with the content-orientated features of educational group-work.

At this stage of the project we are of the opinion that the concept of 'learning to discuss' has received rather less attention than that of 'learning through discussion' and that it is vital to face up to the double task of providing not only materials for discussion but also guidelines for teachers who wish to offer awareness training for pupils participating in a discussion programme.

3. Leadership

The style of leadership offered to the project group was unfamiliar, based as it was on a non-directive approach. It provided a contrast to the more familiar didactic approach of "chalk and talk" and the highly structured elicitation techniques currently being used in the classroom.

The training programme had purposely denied content needs in the initial phase of the programme to give high priority to the process of interaction. This unfamiliar approach may have been frustrating for some members of the group and they may on occasion have withdrawn either physically or mentally from the group experience. However, most of the project group have found ways of meeting their content needs by using the school-based programme or by asking for texts, articles, etc. on particular topics. This has been an important facet of our work together and we must analyse the place of the resource paper in the package we eventually produce and examine areas where contributions would be valuable.

Discussion on group leadership was focussed on the themes of motivation, confidentiality and confidence.

a) Motivation

High motivation is vital for the achievement of competence in any interaction. Motivation relating to the development of the content of the curriculum appears to have superseded motivation to focus on the process of education. The demands of the examination system were seen by the group to be a constraining influence on the development of discussion programmes in secondary schools. It was recognised that learning through discussion was not possible until pupils had achieved the necessary discussion skill and there appeared to be difficulty in finding a locus for the management of this task in schools, as they are presently organised. The project group, as representatives of their staff colleagues, felt there was a need for a great deal of support and clarification of a policy to promote discussion group-work in secondary education.

b) Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a significant concept in group-work. We have agreed that verbatim reporting of the group process was inappropriate and in breach of confidentiality. Group members had to feel free to express their views without being concerned that their colleagues could identify these views in any subseqnent report.

It was agreed that the group experience had been of significant value to the project group but it was recognised that it was a very difficult experience to describe to colleagues. "I feel different" - "I'm listening more" - "I feel more confident in discussion situations" - is regarded as rather ineffective feedback. The possibility that a fuller description of the group's work might infringe the confidentiality of the group was also of concern. However, to avoid all opportunities to feedback information was to collude with the stereotype of the "mystique of group-work" and to encourage fantasies about the group experience.

A conceptualised report such as this, with the accompanying video-recording, is designed to manage this problem.

c) Confidence

A sense that pre-service training fits teachers very poorly for discussion group leadership has emerged from our group sessions. In some ways those teachers who possess effective performance skills are the teachers who may be at risk when it comes to discussion group management. It is far more difficult to refrain from offering a well-informed opinion than to be in the position of avoiding articulating an opinion because one is of the view "I don't know what I think till I hear what I say". We had examples of the expression of firmly held beliefs in our group and on one occasion one of our group members said, "The longer I teach the more afraid I am of becoming a bigot". The internal pressure surrounding this statement is descriptive of a situation where everything is changing and nothing is certain and where there is an expectation from students that the teacher above all will represent an island of certainty in a complex society.

In discussion teachers will be asked for <u>their</u> opinions and it is difficult to acquire the skill of facilitating the group process without always providing the fodder for discussion.

As our discussions developed, the realisation that what we may be talking about was not discussion skill but <u>listening</u> skill on the part of the teacher, was revealed as an appropriate shift. Confidence in discussion leadership may be acquired through developing reflective, interpretative skills which promote insight and increased sensitivity to students' needs. These skills will develop the teacher's capacity for empathy which can mobilise anxiety in discussion without becoming bogged down in sympathy. The teacher who sees himself as a resource who offers facts but never opinions or advice, builds a student's confidence in the legitimacy of his role in the discussion group.

We must now consider process shapers which are present in every group, but which are not under conscious control. These processes constitute the hidden curriculum of the group. If the leader and group members are unskilful and insensitive in responding to these unconscious or half-conscious processes, they may interfere with the group's task.

We must, therefore, consider the part that expectation, perceptions with no basis in reality, and the personal history of each one of us, played in the life of the group.

4. Expectation

The expectation we brought to the group experience coloured our view of the group's work initially. We had derived our expectations from the professional contacts we had had prior to the project and some of us were prepared for a learning experience which involved the teacher him/herself, and others were at the stage of seeing the task in pupil terms with a focus on pupil discussion skills.

It also appeared to be true that even though the group's task and the time commitment involved in completing the task was defined before the

initial group meeting, that none of this thinking could be taken for granted. There was a need for expectations to be worked through and for a consensus to be reached in group terms on the nature of the primary task of the group, before effective work could begin. We saw that this search for a consensus about the primary task took several sessions, and that the group experienced cohesiveness when it had resolved some of its early reservations about the nature of the task.

5. Perceptions with no Basis in Reality ('fantasies')

In conjunction with the expectations everyone brings to a group, we also brought our fantasies about group experiences. These fantasies, unless discussed, may affect the development of the group. Certain fantasies foster inhibition and avoidance reactions - an unwillingness to share feelings and experiences at anything other than a superficial level.

An assumption that a session can be missed without affecting the process of the group was seen to be false and we were able to discuss the effect that missing certain sessions had on group members and what this may mean to children who have to re-enter a group after a period of absence.

Fantasies about leadership are predominant in educational groups. The assumption that individual members' contributions are of little consequence and that the group is acting out the fulfilment of the leader's fantasy about the group, have a foundation in the didactic approach most often used in educational settings. We discussed the relationship between opening up the system in discussion groups but retaining the teacher's authority so that group discussion did not degenerate into an informal, conversational style and control of the content of the discussion was retained. We compared this authoritative style with an authoritarian style, often seen in a 'closed' system, where all discussion flows through the teacher and he appraises the validity of the opinions presented by pupils as the discussion

proceeds.

Another prevalent fantasy was "who has experience of groups" as they must be the people to whom we defer or listen with a greater degree of attention. We have come to understand that <u>everyone</u> has group experience which, if shared, can be of value to the work of the group. It is the learning of a style of reflecting on, of giving feedback and of conceptualising the group process which is the significant factor in group development.

6. <u>Personal History</u>

Generating fantasies has much to do with our own personal experiences, which have been shaped by the variety of social, professional and the institutional groups to which we have belonged. The "luggage" which we bring to the group about issues such as power, authority, co-operation and rivalry obviously affects the group process. Talk about school not only triggers immediate memories of teaching experiences, but also of our own learning experiences in the classroom.

We observed that when adults participate in developmental group-work they very often censor the feelings they bring to the group and try to maintain discussion at a rational level. It was seen to be far easier to talk about the management of pupils in general terms rather than to talk about the personal stresses experienced by teachers at an individual level. The reason for this is perhaps based on the pattern of interaction which is reinforced in the classroom. The feelings and individual opinions of pupils are often undervalued and tend not to be reinforced as a mechanism through which real learning can take place. For example, pupils may gain the impression that how one <u>feels</u> about a poem is less valuable than how one <u>thinks</u> about its style and content. Gradually the student's perceptions are shaped in the direction of an academic approach to poetry which denies the ability to respond sensitively to written material.

Members of the project group tended to feel that the real work of the group began when individuals began to comment on the denial of emotional issues in discussion and to understand the cultural reasons for this denial. When it was recognised that it was appropriate to work on the feelings members brought to the group, a shift occurred in sharing and support for each other, and a valuing of individual differences. At this point also the group felt more able to discuss issues of personal concern to its members rather than distancing the discussion by containing it at an abstract level.

It was realised that many in-service courses which initially may be focussed on the functioning of teachers become focussed on the problems of students. We suggested that stresssful issues which concern teachers may produce such anxiety in the group that the only way to cope with it was to construct a set of defence mechanisms to contain the anxiety. Group leaders may often be guilty of colluding with or failing to recognise such defence mechanisms and this has the effect of obstructing the management of the group's primary task and diminishing the creativity of the group members.

INTERPRETING GROUP-WORK CONCEPTS

One of the major tasks of the project group is to identify concepts of group-work of value to other disciplines and to establish a conceptual framework meaningful to educationists. Translating the jargon of one discipline so that it illuminates the work of another is continuing to be a fruitful exercise.

Concepts described by the school of group analysis, of which Foulkes is a prime exponent, have been particularly helpful in the development of understanding of the group experience.

1. Resonance

   One of our members was particularly effective at noting 'resonance' in the group discussion - the feeling of excitement, stimulation, the pushing back of the barriers, the removing of scales from one's eyes so that a familiar situation is looked at afresh.

   Resonance is essential to the process of learning and must be achieved at a personal level between group members before it can have an effect on the group's task. Our discussion on the importance of being able to manage oneself - of understanding one's own inner conflicts - before one could manage the task, described the application of the concept of resonance to the role of the discussion group leader.

2. Resistance is opposite to resonance

   It may be used deliberately or unconsciously and has much to do with fantasy and the 'luggage' carried from the individual's personal background or previous social context. It thrives on assumptions, role allocations, shared values and prejudices and situations which preclude the examination of these factors. Our personal notes include many references which describe individual and generalised resistances. That many of these resistances were addressed and coped with is a tribute to the work of the group members.

3. Transfer

   The formation of the group activated memories of previous group experiences. The fact that the group was held on college territory, that the resource person was a college lecturer, may, at an unconscious level, have triggered student memories, favourable or unfavourable. In-service training courses need to be designed to take this possibility into account. Some group members may have transferred ways of coping in a student group to the present group.

   The expectation that the resource person should provide the learning material for the group, angry feelings about lecturers being out of touch with the reality of the classroom, although not dominant features of process of our project group, exemplify issues which may arise as a result of 'transfer'. Research projects are often affected by the element of transfer as memories of the use and sometimes abuse of researchers' relationships with school organisations colour teachers' views as to the value of educational research.

   Transfer is often an unconscious mechanism which is worked through by

the group discussion. Transfer is not necessarily always negative - equally possible is the transfer of feelings about the resource person as a nurturer of ideas or as the gate-keeper of insight.

The importance of being aware of this group mechanism which may distort perception, is not so that we can control or extinguish it, but so that one can be reflective about it and check out with other members the realities of individual perception. Transfer, whether negative or positive, is always present, but need not be unmanageable. It becomes maladaptive when unquestioned group behaviour is handed down from generation to generation and increasingly affects group process, eg. as seen in authoritarian behaviour.

4. Displacement

From time to time uncomfortable feelings were experienced in the group. When this happened the individual tended to displace these feelings onto something or somebody else, the head of department, the head teacher, the school, the SED, the project leader.

At times we were rather an anxious group - the atmosphere was tense, conflicts which we didn't want to air were being displaced onto discussion topics which were considered rationally to be more appropriate. Discussion of feelings of guilt about not working hard enough, about an ill-defined task, were in fact displaced feelings of anger about the resource person not taking the task in hand and structuring it so that everyone's role was clear and straightforward. When we did begin to discuss the process of displacement it was seen that avoidance of the unexpressed hostility was damaging the group even more than the examination of the angry feelings and relief was expressed by group members when the issues were eventually dealt with.

The hall of mirrors

A nice image from Foulkes. The group is a hall of mirrors in which parts of ourselves are reflected and counter-reflected. We see ourselves in others and others see themselves in us. We like some of what we see and identify it as part of our better sevles; we decide to get angry with or deny parts of other people because they remind us of bits of ourselves we prefer to leave hidden.

5. Part-Processes of Displacement

a) Splitting

This is a part process of displacement and may be the method we adopt to cope with the desire to displace the difficult feelings we are experiencing in a group. Most relevant to us is splitting ideas of conceptual clarity, 'accurate' language, examination of facts and dismissal of vagueness and labelling them 'good' and labelling intuition and the feedback of emotions as 'bad'. Therefore group members in our own or in student groups are split into the 'good' or the 'bad' category depending on whether we place a higher value on rational or intuitive explanations. Indeed whole groups can be cast off into outer darkness as they develop a perceived style of discussion of rational v. irrational issues.

Of course, at the time we were unconscious of this polarization of the issues, but as we look back at the pattern of development of the group we perhaps can see evidence of this part-process of splitting and its effect on the development of the project.

b) Scapegoating

There are certain taboos which prohibit the direct challenge of a tutor or teacher when the group is in the grip of wishing to displace its uncomfortable feelings. Sometimes a group member can unconsciously be selected by the members as a recipient of these uncomfortable feelings or he can be 'elected' as the rebel member of the group who will 'speak out' on behalf of the others to try to resolve the difficult situation. It is necessary for the teacher or group leader to allow direct hostility to be expressed in his direction if it is not to be displaced in this way.

c) Pairing

The group composition allowed for productive pairing and for non-productive pairing to take place. Productive pairing was evident when individuals from different departmental backgrounds complemented each other's perceptions to provide a fuller picture of an issue than would have been achieved from an individual statement. Non-productive pairing was evident when submissive members allowed more dominant members to speak for them.

CONCLUSION

The significance of observing group processes in action is that it is inevitable that they will emerge in the groups with which we are involved and that leader effectiveness is often dependent on reflecting on the reason for their emergence at a certain point in time and conceptualising the effect these processes will have on the group's work as a whole.

When we embarked on the first phase of the project it appeared that the communication issues - the skills aspect of the discussion process - may have dominated the group's work during the term. However, at a fairly early stage the group showed itself willing to explore the hidden elements of the discussion process by the comments "Perhaps we need to talk more about listening skills rather than discussion skills" and "Perhaps it would be helpful to discuss these issues in personal terms rather than in the abstract".

The achievements of the group experience can be seen in the consensus on issues deserving attention by discussion group leaders and in the development of a communication style which allows the group to reflect on and elucidate the discussion process.

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* The structure of this report was derived from Bramley (1979). Group Tutoring: Concepts and Case Studies. Kogan Paul.

A VCR of the project group describing their group experience is available from the DDG.

PART II

THE LEARNER - DEVELOPING DISCUSSION SKILLS

A SKILLS-CENTRED APPROACH TO LEARNING TO DISCUSS

The DDG identifies three stages of development through which students must progress before they could be said to have acquired appropriate discussion skills for learning.

Students should:

1) have the ability to talk appropriately in a classroom group and to demonstrate effective listening behaviour;

2) become aware of the process of discussion and demonstrate observation and perception skills;

3) utilise discussion skill for learning by presenting opinions, contributing to argument and responding appropriately to the opinions of others.

To facilitate progress from one stage to another teachers should have a knowledge of the communication process and of relevant group processes.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS MODEL

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

LINGUISTIC SKILLS		PARALINGUISTIC SKILLS	
RECEPTIVE SKILLS	EXPRESSIVE SKILLS	VOCAL SKILLS	NON-VOCAL SKILLS (facial expression, eye contact, gesture etc)
	SPEECH SKILLS	PROSODIC SKILLS (intonation, rhythm, pace etc)	

INTERACTION SKILLS
(sequencing skills)

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication skills can be defined as the appropriate synchronization of the verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication behaviour. When 'what you say' is complemented by 'how you say it' the listener receives an effective message. We are all aware of students whose verbal messages are adequate, but whose non-verbal messages are inadequate, or conversely the student who masks poor verbal content with non-verbal skill. Voice quality and facial expression are recognised as the most potent features of non-verbal communication, but other features such as gesture and posture also carry information in an interaction.

LINGUISTIC SKILL

Linguistic skill combines both receptive and expressive skill. Both aspects are dependent on the individual's specific language ability, subtle variations in normal language ability being often difficult to detect. Students in the early years of secondary school are particularly vulnerable to stereotyped assumptions about their intellectual ability being made on the basis of communication behaviour: "he's a day dreamer" .... "he's not very bright". In fact such behaviour might be an indicator of a developmental delay in language skill.

We are in no sense thinking here about students with specific language disorders, but of students who have sufficient developmental language delay to affect their ability to cope with the normal secondary school curriculum. Some of these students will be identified as having specific learning difficulties in S1 and S2, others might well remain in their class groups taking on the role of the silent member of the group, or the disruptive member, depending on the unconscious efforts made by the student to cope with communication in class. Analysis of expressive language abilities can be affected by these different coping behaviours. It is often more effective to describe a student's receptive skill to gain a true appreciation of his difficulties.

PARALINGUISTIC SKILLS

Literally, the skills which run parallel to language, sub-divided, into vocal and non-vocal aspects. There are the behaviours which remain stable throughout an interaction such as dress or physical appearance, for example, and those which are dynamic and ever-changing, such as facial expression and gesture or the prosodic skills of rhythm, pace, intonation and stress in speech.

All of these behaviours 'leak' information about the feelings of an individual. They are susceptible to changes due to anxiety and stress. In set-piece situations such as an interview or a group situation it is possible to learn appropriate non-verbal behaviours. However, we can never completely bring our non-verbal behaviours under conscious control. Cues relating to the emotional state of the speaker are always available if the listener cares to observe them.

INTERACTION SKILL

Communication skills as well as being caught, can also be taught. Everyone can become a skilled communicator - communication styles can be learned.

This is particularly true of interaction skills - the utilisation of verbal and non-verbal skills in one to one, small group and large group situations. While we may be comfortable and reasonably skilled in social encounters with friends, it may be a different matter when we are faced with the request to contribute to a small group discussion or to produce a loud enough voice for a large group presentation. We may need to practice the skills required for these situations.

DISCUSSION SKILL

The project group has identified (with the help of an out of print text by Miles (1969)) the interaction skills which are essential to discussion group participants and in this section of the report will be describing the strategies through which these behaviours can be learned.

There are seven skills which are a higher order function of the communication skills mentioned previously:

1) Organising skill

2) Attending skill

3) Contributing skill

4) Responding skill

5) Listening/observing skill

6) Role-taking skill

7) Group coping skill

It is assumed that students who have acquired the listening and speaking skills in Stage 1 are ready to work on the discussion skills in Stage 2, namely skills 1-5. Skills 6 and 7 are more advanced skills which can be learned as part of the final stage of development.

1) Organising skill

Students are rarely given the responsibility for organising the physical settings in which they learn so that they remain largely unaware, or at least unaware at a conscious level, of the effect that the physical arrangement of the classroom has on the interaction of the class group. We suggest that they should become aware of the differing effects of a linear arrangement, a circular arrangement and a semi-circular arrangement on group discussion. That they should experience the effect on group talk of being placed on the edge of the group, or outside the group.

Students should also become aware of the influence of factors such as size and composition on group interaction. Are groups of 30 able to discuss as effectively as groups of 10-15 members? What are the advantages of dividing a class into sub-groups of six members? Organisational factors such as single sex groupings and mixed groupings can be discussed. Groups organised on the basis of a factor such as the contribution rate of the members can be studied.

Organisational skill is the ability to take into consideration all the factors mentioned prior to undertaking the task of discussion. Skill will also be shown in the ability of the students to analyse the management of a group task where organisational factors affected the outcome.

2) Attending skill

The recognition that everyone has something to contribute to group discussion is a sophisticated notion which many adults have failed to learn. A group organised to enable each member to make a contribution and to convey the awareness that everyone's perception is valid in group discussion, is a rare occurrence. Often groups of students are dominated by one or two articulate students, the quieter members colluding with the need of these pupils to talk by failing to exercise their own expressive skills.

The development of attending skill is focussed on the dominant members of the group who must learn to perceive that there are members of the group who are not participating in the discussion. Their effort should be aimed at encouraging the silent members to contribute rather than pursuing their own line of argument.

Attending skill is the ability to identify the members of the group who have not yet contributed to the group discussion and through non-verbal or verbal cues facilitate the involvement of others.

In the early stages of development of this skill the sequencing process may appear mistimed and uneven with adverse affects on group communication. The language processing time required by silent members is often much longer than required by articulate members who are used to a much faster sequencing process. As the group develops its attending skills there may be several bouts of silence interspersed with contributions. Silence should become less of a feature of the group talk as the group consciously works on attending skills.

3) Contributing skill

It is necessary for group members who fail to participate effectively to work on the development of their contributing skills. When the articulate members of the group have faced up to the issue of developing attending skill so that all group members feel comfortable about contributing to the discussion, comments such as "I never get a word in edgeways because .... always dominates the discussion" should fade into the background. (cf. oral communication assessment for typical comments from non-contributors). As contributing skill is a higher order function of the speaking skill mentioned in Stage 1, we can assume that the member working on this skill is able to frame appropriate contributions and that contribution skill is based on the ability to intervene at an appropriate moment in the discussion, sharing the responsibility with other group members to complete the discussion task.

A behaviour analysis adapted from Rackham (1971) may be helpful to the teacher in categorising contribution skills:

(a) proposing: the ability to put forward a suggestion;

(b) building: the ability to develop another's suggestion;

(c) supporting: the ability to declare support or agreement with another's proposal;

(d) disagreeing: the ability to declare a difference of opinion;

(e) seeking information: the ability to seek facts, opinions or clarification from another group member;

(f) giving information: the ability to offer facts, opinions, to clarify another member's contribution.

These sub-skills of contribution skill are of relevance to all members of the group and not only to the silent members. Articulate members may feel that the strategies they use in group discussion lack variety and are limited in range and should be encouraged to develop in new areas.

4) Responding skill

Having achieved the skill to produce the variety of contributions necessary for effective participation in discussion, the task if then to refine that skill for the benefit of the group, selecting the contribution behaviour most appropriate to the management task. We shall refer to this skill as responding skill.

In the early stages of discussion many propositions may be made which are not fully understood by members of the group. Responding skill is the ability to select a word, or sequence of words from a statement made by another group member which clarifies or teases out the meaning of the statement for others. There are different types of responding skill:

(a) building: the ability to develop another's suggestion;

(b) supporting: the ability to declare support or agreement with another's proposal;

(c) testing understanding: the ability to clarify complex statements.

Appropriate responses to clarify meaning may not in themselves initiate new ideas in group discussion but may provide the group with the material from which new ideas may be generated.

The practising of appropriate responding skills may also involve the identification of maladaptive responding skills, eg.

(a) attacking/defending: a behaviour which is based on a value judgement, is emotional and does not recognise the value of others' contributions;

(b) blocking/difficulty - stating: behaviour used to block the explorations of other members of the group, without offering any alternative ideas;

(c) shutting out: behaviour which excludes other members' participation in the discussion.

5) Listening/observing skill

It is unlikely that the skills of organising, attending, contributing and responding can be learned without the development of listening and observing skills. We use the term 'listening skill' in terms of the verbal elements of the interaction and 'observing skill' in relation to the non-verbal elements.

Listening and observing skills are often affected by the distorted perceptions of the group member. An anxious member may 'read' another member's non-verbal behaviour as 'shutting him out' from the discussion. Another member who lacks confidence may be so self-conscious about his own contributions that he is unable to take in the contribution of other group members. Some group members may have poorer basic listening ability than other group members so that they have a well established habit pattern of partial listening to the contributions of others, and as a result persistently misconstrue their meaning.

Listening and observing requires concentration. The student who has concerns which do not properly belong to the group discussion may not be able to control the way in which they contaminate the group experience. Goffman (1957) calls this 'other consciousness' - the bringing to an interaction assumptions about the subject under discussion, such as irrational feelings or prejudices, which may prevent the resolution of the group's task. The student who practises listening and observing skills, is seeking to become aware of his own self-consciousness and tendency to 'other-consciousness' and through management of himself is more able to manage the task of discussion.

6) Role-taking skill

Skills 6 and 7 are composite skills which cannot be learned until the preceding skills have been acquired. They belong to Stage 3 of the developmental process. The skills which have preceded role-taking emphasise the individual group member's responsibility for developing his own skills. Role-taking requires the individual to examine himself in the context of the group, to ask himself about the roles most regularly adopted by the other group members and the role adopted by himself in discussion. Role-taking skill is the ability to become flexible in use of the roles taken in discussion so that roles appropriate to the management of the task can be adopted.

Group discussion becomes sterile and is perceived as boring and irrelevant if the group has settled into stereotyped role-taking. Some of the roles have been mentioned previously, the dominant member who has the fantasy that the group is dependent on his contributions, the silent member who has the fantasy that the other group members consider his opinions unworthy of consideration. Other more subtle roles can also be observed:

(a) initiator - may take the lead in organising the group, help to start the discussion, introduce new ideas, raise new questions;

(b) clarifier - asks questions, asks for additional information, asks to have vague statements interpreted;

(c) summarizer - indicates where the group stands on an issue, points out areas of agreement or disagreement, comments on the point reached in the argument by the group;

(d) evaluator - is interested in group process, comments on the effectiveness of the group to attend, respond and listen to each other. Comments on the need to slow down, listen to a particular member's comments with the intention of improving the group's interaction.

Skilled group members should be able to adopt any of the roles mentioned above. The group member most often observed to be an initiator can gain a great deal from practising the role of the evaluator and vice-versa. It is only by practising roles which are unfamiliar to us in a controlled setting that we become flexible and responsive participants.

7) Group coping skill

This skill, as with skill 6, is a combination of the other skills which have been learned. Group coping skill is however geared to a purpose.

We have had in mind up to this point the kind of group discussions which extend one's thinking, develop an appreciation of others' points of view, but do not necessarily require action as a result of the discussion. Group coping skill is connected to the discussion task, requiring agreement from the members of the group. A task which involves making a decision or solving a problem, but which highlights the process by which the solution was achieved. Whereas the development of the skills described previously can take place in an experimental situation, group coping skill is the culmination of this activity and is the application of the skills to a 'real' group situation. The student is moving to a position of using the skills at an understood, perceived, conscious level. This is the bridgehead for moving from the task of learning to discuss to the task of learning through discussion. The focus now includes the students' management of the content of a discussion as well as his management of its process.

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LEARNING TO DISCUSS: A PILOT PROGRAMME

A range of discussion strategies has been piloted by DDG associates working with SI-SV students.

Programmes have been successfully completed with large groups divided into sub-groups of six members, and smaller groups of not more than 15 members. Three associates have published details of their programmes (Hunter & Pratt 1984, Johnson 1985) and many others have provided documentation which can be viewed by teachers visiting the DDG Resource Centre. A 'Learning to Discuss' package has been produced which contains video recorded programmes for use on school-based in-service courses.

We have found that student groups vary in their ability to develop discussion skills. Some skills require more attention than others so that supplementary material may be needed to stabilise particular skills.

The following issues should be considered by the teacher before a programme is implemented:

1) size and composition of groups;

2) arrangement of the physical setting (every effort should be made to avoid a classroom with fixed desks and chairs);

3) resource material for diagnostic assessment;

4) recording methods to be used by the teacher and by the student group for formative assessment.;

5) resource material for the discussion programme.

1) SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF THE GROUP; 2) ARRANGEMENT OF THE PHYSICAL SETTING

We have tried to be realistic - we know that some teachers will be working with class groups of up to 30 members. If it is at all possible we recommend that the programme is piloted first of all with a group of 8-10 students so that both students and teachers can assess the value of the programme in optimum conditions. The programme may not work for you if the size of the group is unmanageable, if you are unfamiliar with the learning points to be derived from it, or if you tolerate a physical setting which is totally inappropriate.

One of the teachers in our project team is at present managing a group of 26 pupils for a discussion skills programme. The room allocated to him is furnished with desks and chairs which are of modern design but are fixed together. He is managing the size of the group by sub-dividing the class, but having had one disruptive session trying to arrange the desk unit he has persuaded his head teacher that the success of the programme is dependent on more flexible seating and has achieved a more suitable classroom.

3) DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

Where the 'Learning to Discuss' programme is being implemented with SI and SII groups, it is necessary to assess basic oral skills before

assessing the higher order skills of discussion. It may be inappropriate to continue with the discussion programme if the oral skills of the students are poor. Consultations with English, Drama and Learning Support Services are important as they may be using methods of assessment which complement those being considered for the discussion programme. A sample of an oral skills assessment is included here. It was devised in consultation with a Lothian secondary school which was developing a group-work programme for SII English.

RESOURCE MATERIAL FOR DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

Project Report

This project was initiated by the Deputy Head of a Lothian secondary school and members of the English Department.

The aim was to design an 'oral skills' component for a small group programme for SII to begin in June 1982.

Two groups of five pupils were selected to pilot a variety of assessment and development techniques during Term 2 and this report is based on the resource material which proved effective with these pupil groups.

The pupils appear to have enjoyed the small group sessions and I am grateful to the two teachers involved for their cooperation and interest.

Phase 1: Diagnostic Assessment

Traditionally teachers have been much more concerned with evaluation following the completion of a programme rather than pre-testing pupil groups to provide a base-line for programme planning. Recently, however, educationists have become much more aware of the value of diagnostic assessment.

Assessment of oral skills aims to describe the quality of communication skill the student brings to the group. The following areas were selected as being significant:

1. Listening and Understanding
2. Expression
3. Non-verbal behaviour
4. Interaction behaviour
5. Self-assessment

The focus of the assessment for listening and understanding, and expressive skill was on the content and form of linguistic ability rather than on its use in a social context. It was felt that initial observations on content and form could be supplemented by observations based on the developmental programme, to provide a global picture of the student's application of language skills to social situations.

ORAL COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT

NAME ..... TEACHER .....

AGE ..... SMALL GROUP .....

CLASS ..... DATE OF ASSESSMENT .....

ORAL COMMUNICATION BEHAVIOUR	CAUSE FOR CONCERN?	ASSESSMENT
Listening and understanding	YES/NO	_____
		EPVT TT
		_____
		VA AMS
		_____
Expression	YES/NO	_____
		Raconte Reporter's Test
		_____
Non-verbal behaviour	YES/NO	_____
		BA
		_____
Interaction behaviour	YES/NO	_____
		Interaction Game
		_____
Self assessment	YES/NO	

GROUP-WORK PROGRAMME

Modules

_____

_____

1. Listening and Understanding

Three specific areas were examined:

a) listening vocabulary

b) receptive syntax

c) auditory memory span.

The assessment asked the questions:

Does the student have a listening vocabulary commensurate with his chronological age?

Is the student able to understand the syntax of instructions?

Can s(he) retain a sound sequence to show evidence of listening ability?

The assessments used were:

a) English Picture Vocabulary Test (Brimer & Dunn 1973)

b) Token Test (De Renzi and Vignolo 1962)

c) Digital memory span test.

English Picture Vocabulary Test

This test was used to test the hypothesis that not all students in SII will have a similar 'vocabulary age' and that there may be low-scoring and high-scoring students in the same class group.

Standardised up to the age of 18 years, this test provides information on the ability of the student to select one picture out of four from a one-word stimulus.

While criticisms might be made of the vocabulary used in the test, which casts doubt on the inter-group reliability of the results, it nevertheless provides a useful description of the range of listening vocabulary ability within a pupil group.

The students who were assessed showed a wide range of listening vocabulary ability, from 8 years to 17 years within a class group of similar chronological age. The test was therefore a useful indicator of pupils who are at risk when curriculum content demands a knowledge of specialised vocabulary as in mathematics or science.

Token Test

This test is described as a 'sensitive test of receptive language ability'. It illustrates the types of syntactical structures which a pupil might find difficult to understand in the classroom, when given instructions by a teacher.

An example of a structure which may cause difficulty is item 44, touch

- with the blue circle - the red square where word order might be regarded as unusual.

The test is scored on a right/wrong basis and care must be taken in its administration so that the use of intonation and stress do not give too many clues as to meaning. The tester should also attempt to standardise the pace at which he presents the instructions.

There are no standardised scores available for groups of secondary pupils, but the results of this test can be paired with those of the EPVT. A pupil scoring at a 17+ age level on EPVT with one error on the TT might be taken as a reference score for the year group.

In our administration of the test we tended to use Part IV to familiarise pupils with the style of assessment and Part V as the prime indicator of typical errors. Items 43, 44 and 45 are of particular interest.

Test items with further description and application of the Token Test can be found in Boller and Dennis (1979).

Auditory Memory Span

Some of the items in Part V of the Token Test require a well-developed auditory memory span so that the salient features of an instruction are retained:

e.g. "Before touching the yellow circle, pick up the red square".

A simple test of auditory memory span is the digital memory test where pupils are asked to repeat a series of numbers increasing by one digit in each series of three.

Some pupils in the year group are able to retain as many as 10 digits, while others find it difficult to remember more than 6. Most adults can remember 9 digits with practice.

This test illustrates why some pupils find it difficult to carry out instructions successfully. The pupil who is unable to select "English Book 1, page 43, exercise 5 beginning at number 4" may be the pupil who has a shorter than average auditory memory span.

2. Expression

Four aspects of expressive language are described by the recommended assessment procedures:

(a) the ability to give instructions

(b) the ability to sequence ideas

(c) the ability to use a variety of syntactical structures

(d) the duration of talk.

The Reporter's Test

It is recommended that the Reporter's Test, De Renzie and Vignolo's adaptation of the Token Test to examine the expressive function, is used to assess (a).

Administration of the 20 tokens used for the test is described thus:

> "Now, I am going to do some things with these tokens. Imagine that a person is sitting beside you, but is prevented from seeing what I am doing by a curtain (the examiner shields the tokens with a cardboard vertically held). Your task is to describe what I am doing as carefully as possible, so that this person would be able to repeat exactly my performance on another set of tokens. As you see, there are circles and squares, some are large and some small, some are yellow, others red, black, green and white. If only the large tokens are present (the small tokens are covered up) and I touch this one (the E points to the red circle), you must say 'Touch the red circle', but if I touch it when all tokens are present you have to say 'Touch the large red circle', otherwise it would be unclear which of the two red circles has been pointed to."

Parts 1-4 remain as in the Token Test. Part 5 is adapted as follows:

Part 5 (large tokens only are presented)

17. Put the red circle on the green square.

18. Put the circles on the squares of the corresponding colour.

19. Put the green square away.

20. Put the green square near the red circle.

21. Touch the squares slowly and the circles quickly.

(NB A pause must be inserted before touching each square, while circles are touched rapidly).

22. Put the red circle between the yellow and the green square.

23. Touch all the circles, except the green one.

24. Put the yellow square under the black circle.

25. Put all the circles into the box.

26. Put the squares one on the other.

The English Department should consider the most appropriate scoring system for their needs. Options are a pass/fail score and a weighted score of a combination of the two methods. A weighted score might assign 1 point to each relevant word exactly reported, except the verb. For example, if a pupil reports "Touch the red circle - and it's small" he will gain fewer points than "Touch the small red circle".

The functions (b), (c) and (d) are described using a set of Raconte cards (Le Boeuf). A picture sequence of black and white line drawings telling a story is sorted by the student into the appropriate order. He is then asked to tell the story. An audio-recording of the student's story can then be analysed by the teacher and the quality of the language assessed. It should be possible for the English Department to reach a consensus on the quality of language expected for this task. For example, a scoring system could be devised to indicate which students used clause structure in telling the story and which students were at the conjoining stage of language development. The appropriate position of adjectives and adverbs might also be a useful indicator of appropriate language development.

One of the features of social competence as described by Mehrabian (1972) is 'duration of talk' and to illustrate the differences in student's story-telling a "mean length of utterance" can be assessed by transcribing the audio-recording as a sequence of utterances, calculating the number of linguistic units in each utterance and dividing the sum of the units by the number of utterances.

3. Assessment of Non-verbal Behaviour

The behavioural assessment of communication behaviour as it is affected by stress is offered as a method of structuring observations about non-verbal behaviour. The assessment is designed to encourage the notion that structured feedback of communication behaviour is helpful to pupils, for example when role-playing public speaking or interview situations. However the style of feedback offered is often based on value judgements and infers behaviour rather than describes it.

eg. You looked tense. Could you appear a bit more interested. You don't look very confident.

Such statements do not give pupils a framework for resolving their problems. The following suggestions are intended to focus the pupil's attention on different aspects of the communication process:

Behavioural:	What did you do?
Cognitive:	What were you thinking (saying) to yourself as you did it?
Affective:	How did you feel?
Interpersonal:	How did they respond to you?
Sensory:	Did you blush (perspire) etc?

4. Interaction Behaviour

A simulation entitled 'Lost on the Moon' (in Brooks and Friedrich 1973) was used to assess interaction behaviour in the group. Observation methods described in section 3 can also be used in this section. It may also be of interest to note who emerged as the leader of the group, who remained silent, who asked questions of others, etc.

5. Self-assessment

From my own research experience I have found that self-report questionnaires often provide more reliable information about the nature of a student's difficulty in communication than behavioural assessments. If students can identify their own needs and are motivated to monitor their own behaviour the teacher can more easily adopt the role of 'resource person' or facilitator in the group sessions that follow. Self-assessment indicates whether a student has developed the observation and perception skills necessary to take advantage of a developmental programme. The examples enclosed should be used as part of the programme to monitor progress and not only as diagnostic assessment tools. Students and teachers might work together to compile appropriate self-report questionnaires for their own school.

STUDENT'S SELF REPORT QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME:

YEAR:

Answer YES or NO

1. Do you like answering questions in class?

2. Do you like reading aloud?

3. Would you mind giving a talk in front of the class?

4. Would you ask the teacher if he made a mistake on the blackboard?

5. Would you ask the teacher to explain, if you didn't understand?

6. Would you like taking a message to a teacher you didn't know?

7. When you speak to an adult do you quickly run out of things to say?

8. Imagine you are on a train. Would you begin a conversation with someone your own age?

9. Do you feel at ease when you walk into a party?

10. Do you like buying something from a shop on your own?

11. Do you like speaking on the telephone?

12. If you weren't sure where you were, would you find it easy to ask for directions?

BEHAVIOURAL ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC COMMUNCIATION SKILL

Observers should (a) assess communication behaviour, (b) rate degree of competence, and (c) assess performance in interview. Tick appropriate number in right-hand box.

Facial expression	1.	Tense facial muscles?
	2.	Grimaces, tics, moistens lips?
	3.	'Dead-pan' facial expression?
Gaze	4.	Lack of eye contact?
	5.	Extraneous eye movement?
Posture	6.	Paces back and forth?
	7.	Arms and legs stiff?
	8.	Sways?
Gesture	9.	Repetitive hand and arm movements?
Voice quality	10.	Inadequate volume?
	11.	Inappropriately high pitch?
	12.	Breathy?
	13.	Husky?
	14.	Nasal?
Articulation and prosodic features	15.	Immature articulation?
	16.	Lack of precision?
	17.	Lack of flexibility in intonation ('monotonism')?
	18.	Excessive pace?
	19.	Inappropriate use of emphasis?
Hesitation phenomena	20.	Silent pauses (over 0.5 sec)?
	21.	Repetition of words or phrases?
	22.	Sentence incompletions?
	23.	Intrusive sounds? (um, et, etc)
	24.	Sentence changes (either lexical or grammatical)
Degree of competence in public speaking situation	25.	Highly competent
	26.	Average competence
	27.	A degree of competence
Performance in interview	28.	Markedly different?
	29.	Different?
	30.	No change?

NON-CONTRIBUTORS IN DISCUSSION

People in discussion situations do not necessarily participate in proportion to their ability. There are a multitude of causes for non-participation. Here are just a few possibilities along with typical comments. Which one applies to you most?

1. A lack of confidence in one's ideas.
   "It doesn't make any difference if I say anything or not because I never have anything original to contribute."

2. A lack of emotional involvement in the matters being discussed.
   "I just didn't feel excited about the subject."

3. A lack of skill in verbalising ideas.
   "While the others can state their ideas so much clearer than I can so I would rather just sit back and listen."

4. An inability to think quickly enough to keep up with the general pace of the discussion.
   "By the time I though over the point long enough to have something to say on it, the rest of the group has moved on to something else."

5. A deeper reflection of ideas.
   "Some people just seem to think out aloud but I prefer to think to myself awhile before speaking."

6. An attitude of detached observation.
   "I just like to hear what other people have to say about these things."

7. Habitual shyness.
   "Well I never talk very much."

8. A lack of sleep or general tiredness.
   " I can hardly keep my eyes open."

9. Distraction to more personal problems.
   "The reason I didn't talk today was because I was worrying about something."

10. Submissiveness to more aggressive members.
    "Well I can hardly get a word in edgeways so I'll keep quiet"

11. An inter-personal conflict.
    "I knew that if I ever got started I would have told the tutor off or I would have got mad about X so I decided not to say anything at all."

12. A non-permissive atmosphere.
    "I just don't feel free to speak when Mr ..... is around."

13. An over dominant group leader.
    "He doesn't seem to care what I think, he just seems to want an audience to make his speeches to."

14. Fear of being rejected.
"I'm afraid that everybody will think that what I have to say is just stupid."

15. A solidified pattern of participation.
"Everyone in the group has got used to my not talking much so I feel uncomfortable when I do. People seem very surprised when I do speak.

16. A feeling of superiority.
"That was such a pointless discussion and nobody really knew what they were talking about - it was all a waste of time."

17. A disbelief in the value of discussion.
"Ah well talk never changes anybody's mind - why bother."

18. Lack of knowledge or intelligence.
"I'm afraid that discussion went right over my head."

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RECORDING METHODS FOR FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

There are many recording methods available based on a skills-centred analysis. Bales (1950) Flanders (1970) and Rackham (1971) have all produced resource material which can be adapted by teachers. In the West of Scotland Philp (1984) has devised an assessment on discussion skills. We appreciate that many analysis schedules are not used because they are unwieldy and time consuming and therefore are of little practical application. We recommend that teachers think of interaction analysis as having a dual purpose:

(a) as a method of training oneself in the recording of discussion behaviour so that one develops awareness and sensitivity to the elements of classroom interaction, increasing one's skill in recording discussion behaviour;

(b) as a tool for action research in the classroom. Having become familiarised with the technique teachers are in a position to dissect existing schedules, discarding less useful areas of observation and retaining those elements most essential to their own classroom setting.

We consider that one of these essential elements is 'contribution rate' and that a discussion programme can be improved by noting the CR of a sample of the classroom group, allocating pupils to sub-groups on the basis of high, medium or low CR. Management of the task, (we tried it with the Modern Studies 'Island Game') and the positive feelings of the students, appeared to be enhanced by this strategy. The teacher concerned found this method of recording straightforward and easy to use (cf Tom Johnson PT Modern Studies)*. An extract from his report follows:

"Task 5: Improving the Contribution Rate of the Group Members

We set up an experiment during this period with the help of our consultant Brian Cosford (Sociology Department, Moray House College) who was present as an observer during periods 8 and 9.

The hypothesis is that student groups will significantly improve their management of the task if students with a similar contribution rate are grouped together.

i) Groups 1-4 organise themselves with a set topic for discussion (the impact of television on society)

ii) As the groups discuss the topic each group member records the number of contributions (defined as a verbal input to which all group members listen) made by every group member, including him/herself. A cross denotes a contribution.

iii) Students then change group in accordance with the number of crosses received.

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* Tom Johnson reports fully on his 'Learning to Discuss' programme in Brown and Munn (Eds) 1985 in The Changing Face of Education 14-16. NFER/NELSON. In Press.

iv) The discussion procedure begins again and is evaluated by the teacher and the consultant as a comparison as well as by the students.

v) The class group discuss the accuracy of their observations, their perception of 'a verbal input to which everyone listens' and their feelings about their group allocation.

Comments

Perhaps the major problem which emerges from a task such as this is the unreliability of the recording by group members. For example, in Group 4, A was recorded as having made 3 contributions by some members, while he had scored himself as having contributed 27 times. A helpful discussion was triggered by their evidence, about the nature of a valid contribution.

The four groups which emerged from the experiment were composed of one high contributing group, two medium contributing groups, and one low contributing group. It was necessary for the teacher to make sure that the low contributors emerged in the appropriate group.

Results

The discussion which resulted from this re-grouping was extremely effective as was shown by the recordings of the group members. It is quite clear that the students are learning about and improving their discussion skills. This task has demonstrated that the quieter students are very capable of discussing ably but are clearly often submerged by the louder more aggressive members. One boy who received a nil score in the initial experiment revealed himself as especially able in the reconstituted group.

One boy in particular, as has been mentioned, had never participated so effectively.

The success of the experiment was highlighted by the obvious enjoyment of the 'low contributors' group. However, Group 3, which had achieved a strong identity and had worked successfully together in previous sessions was the only group not to appreciably benefit from the change.

The group with the highest contribution rate particularly enjoyed the challenge of the new group. They found it much harder work and made a real effort to observe simple discussion skill rules.

When asked about the re-constituted groups everyone was pleased or just as happy as they had been previously - there were no negative comments."

(Johnson 1982)

SELF ASSESSMENT

It is difficult to quantify the acquisition of skills. Researchers such as Marzillier (1978) have noted that levels of confidence and positive feelings might show an increase after skills training, but it may be more difficult to demonstrate statistically significant improvements in behaviour.

The most valuable data a teacher can collect may therefore be the students' view of their own shifts in perception or feelings of confidence in discussion. These can be documented through structured recording and collected in a folio to illustrate progress from the beginning to the end of a programme.

A variety of self-assessment measures have been piloted by the DDG based on checklists, sentence completion exercises and self-report questionnaires. The compilation of a folio of recorded material or a diary highlights the teachers' interest in the students' feelings about participation in discussion. Students enjoy being in the role of assessor and can gain a sense of responsibility from setting their own goals for skill development.

Resource material compiled by David Griffiths (PT Modern Studies) is included here.

SELF ASSESSMENT IN STUDENT GROUPS

Introduction

A major aim of this project has been, through our own awareness of discussion group processes, to devise strategies which will help students to become more aware of their own developing discussion skills. These skills include; expressing oneself; being aware of the need for group organisation; self-assertion; responding to others; careful listening; being aware of one's effect on others; coping with group pressure; arriving at a concensus view.

It is clear that both feedback and practice are essential elements in locating and developing any type of behaviour or skill. However, the more research that is completed in this area demonstrates how problematical the topic of assessment in discussion skills has become. Thus, we believe that it might be more meaningful to shift the focus of assessment onto self-assessment, perception skills relating to discussion, and to encourage motivation by enabling the student to define their own problems. However, care should be taken not to read too much into such exercises since the results obtained cannot be regarded as statistically significant on their own. This paper suggests methods of assessment which can be used by students either as pre and post assessments of their progress during a discussion programme or for weekly self-analysis.

Techniques of Self-Assessment

Whichever type of self-assessment technique is used its value should not be seen merely in terms of information-retrieval, but as a contributory factor to the development of the student's perception of communication behaviour

and observation of aspects of social interaction.

There are four main ways in which self-assessment can proceed:

1) A 'goldfish-bowl' format could be used. While a group conduct their discussion in the centre of the room, the rest of the class acting as observers watch the proceedings and report their findings to the members of the group. This type of exercise requires little in the way of teacher preparation, although it leaves no permanent record for subsequent use.

2) The use of audio or video tape machinery. Feedback is immediate and allows a pupil to assess and evaluate his own behaviour from what he hears or sees. The recordings can also be reviewed and used to gauge progress.

3) Pencil and Paper exercises, such as those outlined in the next section. Questionnaires, sentence completion or self-perception exercises can be completed at different phases of the group's life to illustrate shifts in behaviour or attitudes to the discussion group experience.

4) Questionnaires and other exercises need not be used in a pencil and paper way, but can be used as part of a discussion procedure or a group experience. Sharing the responses to a questionnaire with other members of the group, for example, can be a valuable exercise. The less able the pupil, the more consideration has to be given to the actual format of the assessment.

Pencil and Paper Exercises

1. The brain-storming bubble

The idea of brain-storming is to generate as many ideas as possible, and this method offers an open feedback system. The words "Today's Discussion" should be written in the middle of a large sheet of paper, inside a bubble. Lines are drown from the bubble as the pupil free-associates on the topic, writing down comments about his own participation in classroom discussion. Students should be encouraged to aim for quantity rather than quality at this stage. Once this has been done the student can sort out the contents into smaller lists of related ideas, for example, group the ideas according to positive and negative feelings about the discussion process.

ENJOYED IT

DIFFICULT TO GET A WORD IN SOMETIMES

TODAY'S DISCUSSION

WENT WELL

WISH I COULD GIVE MY OPINIONS MORE CLEARLY

For pupils who feel inhibited about such an unstructured system, the following exercises can often provide a helpful trigger.

2. Recording schedule

The idea behind this exercise is for each student involved in a group discussion to count up the number of times a given behaviour occurs.

BEHAVIOUR	NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTIONS					
	David	Tom	Bill	Alison	Eleanor	Eileen
Taking responsibility to contribute						
Responding to other contributions						
Supportive comments						
Aggressive comments						
Total contributions						

A less structured form of this exercise would be to ask the student to draw a line in the middle of the paper. Above the line each student would write the names of those in the group who talked a great deal during today's discussion. Below the line would be written the names of those who did not talk very much. Each time a discussion takes place carry out this exercise. When the students have collected six assessments they should compare them to find out who has changed position.

3. Sentence completion

One great advantage of this type of assessment is that it allows the students to build up a self-portrait entirely in their own words. Sometimes the comments will be self-contratulatory, sometimes they will be negative. If this exercise is repeated at a later date it is possible that students will be able to develop a more detailed view of themselves.

(a) Discussion is .....

(b) In a discussion teachers' .....

(c) When we have a discussion I feel .....

(d) Other people in my class feel ..... about discussion

(e) Discussion in class would be better if .....

(f) The most irritating thing about discussion in our class is .....

(g) The best discussion we ever had was .....

(h) People who are good at discussions have to .....

(i) The number of people in a group for a good discussion should be .....

(j) The best way to sit in a discussion is .....

Sentence completion exercises can be expanded to employ the type of table set out below, with students either working individually or in pairs.

PROBLEM	STEPS TOWARDS SOLVING THIS PROBLEM
Our group's biggest problem is that one or two people tend to dominate the discussion	More of us could take responsibility to contribute, could ask questions to silent members, could change the seating arrangements within the group

4. Self-perception scales

If several scales using pairs of opposite adjectives are placed together they can form an interesting self-perception exercise. Such exercises can be used in at least three different ways:

(a) students could fill in such a sheet at the beginning of the course, and another at a later date. The different responses between the two sheets would become immediately apparent to the students themselves, and would enable them to become aware of any progress, or lack of progress as viewed by themselves;

(b) students could rate themselves as they believe themselves to be "seen by others in the group", and these results could be compared with the way they are actually rated by others. In this way students would gain insight into the way they are perceived by others;

(c) the scales could be completed twice by the student at the beginning of the course: once for "as I am now", and once for "as I would like to be". These could be done on separate sheets and then combined onto the same sheet. Targets for action will be opened up where there are large gaps between the different responses.

	3 2 1 0 1 2 3	
CONFIDENT	.....	EMBARRASSED
LOOK AT PEOPLE WHEN SPEAKING	.....	AVOID EYE CONTACT
LISTEN CAREFULLY	.....	INATTENTIVE
TALKATIVE	.....	QUIET
SPEAK FLUENTLY	.....	SPEAK ABRUPTLY
SPEAK LOUDLY	.....	SPEAK QUIETLY
TAKE INITIATIVE	.....	AVOID TAKING INITIATIVE
EXPRESS TRUE OPINIONS	.....	KEEP OPINIONS TO YOURSELF
EXAMINE OWN IDEAS AND WILLING TO CHANGE	.....	LEAVE DISCUSSION ENTRENCHED
TOLERANT OF OTHERS	.....	INTOLERANT

AS I AM X _____

AS I WOULD LIKE TO BE O .....

5. Questionnaires

(a) Questionnaires focussing on earlier introspective reports or recording responses to stress in discussion (see Resource Paper 5).

(b) Questionnaires noting behaviour occuring during discussion (see Resource Paper 5).

Discussion Questionnaire 1

Sometimes discussions don't go very well. Here are some comments that people made about discussion. Tick the ones that apply to you the most.

1. "It doesn't make any difference if I say anything or not because I never have anything original to contribute."

2. "I just didn't feel excited about the subject."

3. "Other people express their opinions much more clearly than I do so I'd rather sit back and listen."

4. "By the time I thought of what to say the rest of the group had moved on to another point."

5. "Some people seem to think out loud. I prefer to think before I speak."

6. "I never talk very much in discussions."

7. "The reason I didn't talk today was because I'd something on my mind."

8. "Well, I can hardly get a word in edgeways, so I just keep quiet."

9. "I just don't feel free to speak when the teacher is around."

10. "I don't think teachers really want to know your opinions."

11. "I'm afraid that everybody will think that what I have to say is just stupid."

12. "Everyone in the group has got used to me not talking much. People are very surprised when I do speak."

13. "It was such a pointless discussion, nobody really knew what they were talking about - it was all a waste of time."

14. "Talk never changes anyone's mind - why bother?"

Discussion Questionnaire 2

When you are asked the question "Did you have a good discussion" it's sometimes difficult to answer. The following list of discussion behaviours is intended to help you.

	Very often	Often	Never
1. Did you make suggestions?			
2. Did you support suggestions from others?			
3. Did you build on other people's suggestions?			
4. Did you agree with the other group members?			
5. Did you disagree?			
6. Did you express your disagreement?			
7. Did you criticize someone else's view?			

8. Did you defend a view of your own?

9. Did you ever explain or clarify a point for the group?

10. Did you give information to the group?

11. Did you ask for information?

12. Did you shut anyone out?

13. Did you bring anyone in?

(Griffiths 1982)

5) Resource material for the discussion programme

In general we find it helpful to:

(a) discuss with students the components of the skill to be worked on during each session. Audio or video examples are useful. As the programme progresses examples from previous sessions can be used;

(b) use content prompts when students have very little information on which to base a discussion (cf p56);

(c) use process prompts to exemplarise the learning of process skills (cf p59);

(d) use a de-briefing procedure based on the self-assessment measures mentioned earlier, to identifying whether the goal stated at the beginning of the session has been accomplished. The aim of this important task is to help students to be analytical about the acquisition of a skill. It is important that the group identifies problems rather than the teacher and that teachers do not comment on individual students' difficulties. There should be something to positively reinforce in each session and efforts should be made to provide as much positive feedback as possible, particularly when students are working on skills which they find difficult eg. the silent member working on contributing skill, the articulate student working on attending skill;

(e) video feedback: this has been found to be most effective for follow-up sessions (audio feedback or written transcripts are equally useful if video is not available). A video reply of an exercise guarantees the spontaneity of self-critical comments and provides the data for the teacher's positive feedback. Groups who are under the impression that an exercise was not accomplished successfully can have their attention focussed onto the positive aspects of the exercise to demonstrate learning.

CONTENT PROMPTS

In an ideal group discussion all participants openly express their views without fear of embarrassment. However, it has been our experience that not all groups of pupils engaged in discussion do in fact meet this ideal situation. Perhaps due to the ages of the pupils involved or their lack of experience in this type of exercise, we found that the groups we were working with were not sufficiently skilled in non-directive discussions. Often our groups contained 'silent' members; they may have kept their opinions to themselves because they were naturally reserved or because they felt they were being ridiculed by more assertive members in the group. Whatever the reason, the effect was the same, for the group's cohesiveness was seriously impaired.

Faced with such a situation we realised that the socially skilled act we were looking for was too demanding for many of the groups involved. We somehow had to make the exercise easier in order to improve the confidence of the "silent" members to express themselves, to improve the listening skills of the dominant group members, and to convince the whole group of the value of all members contributing in a group discussion. Basically, we had to break down the exercise into something which was, perhaps, a poor relation to the one we were interested in, but gradually, through successive practice, got nearer to the situation we were after.

One method we found helpful in improving the interaction of the group was to introduce content prompts or 'trigger' material. Examples of such material as "Causes of Juvenile Delinquency" and "World Poverty" follow. The material was cut up before the lesson and each prompt (or 'trigger') was folded up and placed in a box. Each pupil in the group received an equal number of 'triggers', and they were then allowed a few minutes to stray and think about the statements they had chosen. After a suitable time (perhaps five minutes) the teacher called for the open exchange to begin.

Although the students were instructed that they need not use any of the 'triggers' that they had been given, and the topic had been covered in a more traditional way in the classroom beforehand anyhow, we found that the pupils were grateful for having ideas to 'hang onto' in front of them. The 'triggers' gave the quieter members confidence to initiate discussion, and also encouraged the more assertive members to listen to their contributions since they realised that what they had to say might indeed be relevant. As the discussion progressed the 'triggers' acted merely as a catalyst to keep the whole thing flowing and the pupils' own ideas and feelings became more prominent as the group moved towards a consensus.

(David Griffiths 1982)

1. World Poverty

    1. Most of the talk about the world's starving millions' and so on is exaggerated. The problems aren't nearly as serious as people make out. If we stopped worrying so much the problems would sort themselves out.

2. The biggest problem is the population explosion. There are too many people to feed and clothe. There must be better birth control in poorer countries.

3. All countries in the world - both the richer and the poorer countries - should be putting much more effort into growing most of their own food.

4. The main thing is to change ourselves. Individual people need to be more generous, live simpler lives, care more about other people and generally live more in tune with nature.

5. There has to be a lot more respect for human rights in the poorer countries before any progress can be made.

6. If people are poor that's mainly because they are not intelligent enough. Often they are lazy - they are just not prepared to work.

7. There has always been poverty, and there always will be. If people want to live in slums, and have more children than they can feed, then that's their business.

8. The poor countries are poor because of their climate and the type of land they have. The tropical heat, the poor soils, the thick jungles, the deserts, the mosquitos, the lack of clean water - you can't expect much progress in conditions like that.

9. Sooner or later the poorer countries are going to band together, and force the richer countries to give them a fairer deal. The question is whether this can be done peacefully or whether it will lead to wars.

10. The rich countries became rich through conquering what are now the poor countries and taking their raw materials. We should repay them now by helping them out of their poverty.

11. There should be fairer terms of trade between the richer and poorer countries. We should let the goods from the poorer countries through our customs free of charge and we should be prepared to pay them realistic prices for their products.

12. It is in the rich countries' own interests to give more aid to the poor countries. Unless they get more aid they will not be able to afford to buy goods from the rich countries.

13. It is only right that we should help those less fortunate than ourselves. This might mean workers in the richer countries having to accept wage cuts.

14. We in Britain cannot afford to help the poorer countries. We need to use what money we have to try to get rid of our own problems such as unemployment.

15. The richer countries should provide food parcels to feed those who are starving in the poor countries.

16. Aid from the rich countries should be in the form of technical

assistance, ie. experts to teach them skills and equipment such as tractors, so that the poor countries can stand on their own feet.

2. Causes of Juvenile Delinquency

1. It is because teenagers are bored - there is not enough in the community for them to do.

2. There isn't enough discipline these days - parents let teenagers away with far too much nowadays.

3. It's the fault of the schools - teachers don't have the same discipline as they used to and teenagers are allowed to get away with far too much.

4. Teenagers who are delinquents have problems that need sorted out - schools don't have the facilities or put in the effort to help these people.

5. Most juvenile delinquents are emotionally disturbed.

6. Most juvenile delinquents suffer from some form of inadequacy - they might be mentally inadequate in some way or have some sort of physical problem.

7. Juvenile delinquents are merely following their basic human instincts - instincts such as aggression and wanting to acquire things.

8. Many juvenile delinquents do not get enough affection from their parents - this causes them to commit these acts in order to get respect and affection from their friends instead.

9. Some people become juvenile delinquents because their well-to-do parents spoil them.

10. Children who are neglected at an early age - allowed to run free and forced to fend for themselves - are more likely to become delinquents when they are teenagers.

11. Most delinquents are lonely - they commit these acts because they have few friends.

12. Most delinquents come from poor homes.

13. Many delinquents are merely following the example of their older brothers and sisters.

14. Most delinquents live in bad housing areas - the area is run-down and the signs of vandalism are everywhere.

15. Problems of divorce and illegitimacy are the causes - children brought up in single parent families are more likely to become delinquents.

16. Rising unemployment is the problem - teenagers have feelings of hopelessness and injustice.

17. The problem is due to the injustice of our society in which wealth and income are unfairly distributed.

18. Punks and anarchists commit acts of delinquency because they see it as a positive act of rejection.

19. It is the fault of the mass media - there is too much violence on TV and in films.

20. The threat of nuclear weapons and war turn people into delinquents.

21. Too much advertising of luxury products is the problem - it frustrates people who cannot afford them.

22. The law courts do not give out stiff penalties to delinquents - this encourages other teenagers to carry out such acts.

23. The police, instead of running around in panda cars, should get back on the beat - this would help them to get to know the community better.

24. What we need is more social workers so that families with problems can be helped.

PROCESS PROMPTS

There are occasions when listening and responding skills need some cueing to get them to 'happen' in a discussion group. Just as 'trigger' material is useful as a strategy to feed in content to an unskilled group, so trigger material based on patterns of interaction instead of content, can be used.

An exercise such as this, based on listening and responding in a group, was devised by an associate member of the DDG. His introduction to the task is as follows: 'It allows pupils to practice a number of skills associated with successful group discussion. Although the exercise is somewhat contrived and may seem at first sight to be complex, it is none the less a very important development stage for pupils to gain some mastering of all the associated tasks. Each pupil has a task sheet and now knows the roles expected of him'. It should be noted that this type of exercise, although of a developmental nature, would not be introduced to a group until they had some experience of discussion processes in their own group. The exercise would be organised by introducing a topic for discussion, then the pupils use the process prompts to structure their interaction. This particular exercise is devised for 6 pupils.

PATTERN OF INTERACTION

1. Starts discussion by giving opinion.

2. Responds to 1, agreeing or disagreeing.

3. Responds to both 1 and 2. Don't give a new idea - just say whether you

agree or disagree with 1 and 2.

4. Introduces new idea - your own opinion.

5. Responds to 4.

6. Asks 5 a question to clarify - make clearer - his/her opinion.

5. Answers 6.

4. Relates his opinion to either 1 or 2.

2. Responds to 4, agreeing or disagreeing.

1. Responds to 4, agreeing or disagreeing.

3. Asks 1 a question, to clarify his/her opinion.

1. Responds to 3.

5. Presents his opinion.

6. Responds to 5.

4. Asks 5 what his opinion is.

2. Responds to 5's reply, revealing his own opinion.

3. Responds to 1's opinion.

4. Responds to 1's opinion - indicates his/her view.

6. Summarizes the position of the group.

If this exercise does not go well, it may be because the pupil does not have the form of words to introduce a statement which expresses agreement, disagreement etc. The teacher may find it useful to have some 'cues' prepared.

eg. "I thought you made a good point when you said ....."

"I didn't agree at all with ..... when he said ....."

"I didn't understand.....when she said....."

"Did you mean .....when you said....."

"The feeling of the group generally seems to be ....."

SPECIFIC TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

1) Oral skills

The significant elements of listening and speaking skills can be demonstrated using

(a) Harnishfeger (1979) Basic Practice in Listening. Love;

(b) (1973) Concept 7-9: Communication. Edward Arnold.

2) Introducing group-work

The importance of getting to know other members of the group can be emphasised by the use of of 'ice-breaker' games from

Krupar, K (1973). Communication Games. Macmillan;
Brandes, D & Phillips, H (1978). The Gamesters Handbook. Hutchison;
Dearling, A and Armstrong, H. The Youth Games Book. I.T. Resource Centre, Quarriers' Homes, Bridge of Weir.

Self-assessment material can be introduced at this stage.

3) Organising skill

(a) The assessment of contribution rate.

(b) A task such as calculating the height of the members of the group will provide the data for discussions on effective group organisation.

4) Attending skill

This session is aimed at discovering that everyone in the group has something of value to contribute and that the group is disabled if it does not use the contributions of all its members - The detective game and the bank robbery game are effective strategies for illuminating these issues. They are available on request from the DDG.

5) Contributing skill

Discussion based on the use of (a) content prompts; (b) tokens.

Six tokens might be allocated to each student. The tokens are 'spent' by members of the group as contributions to discussion. The aim is to develop controlled sequencing of the contributions of group members.

The 'de-briefing' discussion will focus on the strategies used by individuals eg. questioning, making statement, agreeing, disagreeing with a proposition and the sequencing or time-tabling skill of the whole group.

6) Responding skill

The teacher may notice that discussion is ineffective because the participants contribute new ideas at random rather than responding to and developing the ideas of others.

Strategy v) can be developed as follows:

Choose a topic. Allocate content prompts. Allocate four tokens to each member. The blue token represents the new idea which the student will introduce to the group (he can select this from the content prompt or use an idea of his own). When the student has used his blue token he must use his other tokens in response to the ideas produced by the other students.

red might represent agreement

green might represent disagreement

white might represent seeking clarification

orange might represent building on another's comment

Further strategies can be developed on the basis of the contribution skills schedule (ref p32). The students discard their tokens as they complete the task. They are allowed to respond to every statement even though others may have responded to the same idea, however they should make sure that their response is original.

If this exercise does not go well it may be because the student does not have the form of words to introduce a statement which expresses agreement, disagreement, etc. The teacher may find it useful to have some prompts prepared:

eg. "I thought you made a good point when you said ..."

"I didn't agree at all with...when he said ....."

"I didn't understand ..... when he said"

"Did you mean ..... when you said ....."

The follow-up session to this exercise should stress the interpetations the students made on the basis of each comment. This is an excellent feedback exercise as the students check out carefully the assumptions that can be made due to the presence of one word in a statement which may fundamentally affect its meaning.

7) Listening/observing skill

Students may have found that when they were engaged in the 'responding' task that they were not listening to each other carefully enough. There may be specific examples of this which can be used to introduce the session.

The aim of the session is to develop the ability to identify areas of agreement or disagreement in discussion for others. Choose a

topic. Distribute content prompts which illustrate contrasting points of view to two of the group members. A third member is given the task of listening to their presentation of the argument. He is then asked to summarize the points of disagreement between the speakers.

Variations of this task might include:

restating what another member had just said;

summarising a speaker's argument;

summarising the areas of agreement/disagreement in a discussion.

A second session might emphasise the giving of feedback to each other which includes both verbal and non-verbal skills. The topic for discussion should be based on a personal issue such as getting on with teachers/parents. Three students are allocated the roles of speakers and three the role of listener. Process prompts are given to the listeners whose aim it is to encourage the speakers to talk about the topic:

eg. Questioning : "When did you first feel?"

Supportive : "I felt like that when ....."

Clarifying : "Do you mean .....?"

Reflecting : "It seems as if you got upset when ...."

Students should become aware of the contribution of tone of voice, facial expression and eye contact to the effectiveness of this task.

8) Learning new roles

The group should be aware that they are now approaching the stage of synthesising their learning on discussion in the final sessions of the course. An introductory discussion with the group will describe the roles of initiator, clarifier, summariser and evaluator as being of value to the group process. Penportraits of the communication behaviour of group members who adopt these roles can be produced using the skills analysis on which the programme is based.

The group is to hold a discussion on a topic (if the group is advanced enough to cope without content prompts they should take this opportunity to do without them), having been allocated a role. No one else in the group knows which member is playing each role. Two members might be playing the same role. The discussion proceeds and at the end of the discussion members are asked to write down the names of the group members alongside the roles they were thought to be playing.

The follow-up session is focussed on the verbal and non-verbal behaviour which either helped or hindered the group to select the roles accurately.

Initiator : Helps start the discussion
Organises the group
Introduces new ideas
Raises new questions

Clarifier : Asks for additional information
Requests definition of vague terms
Raises questions about previous contributions

Summariser : Keeps group up to date on their progress
Indicates where they stand on an issue
Points out areas of agreement or disagreement

Evaluator : Points out weaknesses in the group process
Tells the group how well they are managing the task.

9) Coping with a group task

This session should take place when the teacher is sure that it can be accomplished successfully. If the timing is appropriate the students will feel a sense of achievement in the way they managed the task. The next stage is the transition to a content-orientated programme with the process issues receiving less prominence.

The Task: This game was devised by Jay Hall and is based on work performed by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the USA. A copy of 'Lost on the Moon' (Brooks and Friedrich, 1973) is given to each group member. First of all each student must complete the form independently without discussing it with anyone else. The teacher then tells the group that they have 20 minutes to reach an agreement on the rank order of the items. A completed form should be presented to the teacher at the end of this time containing the group decision. Agreement must be reached by discussion; there should be no vote-taking or decision-taking by a sub-group.

The follow-up discussion should take place before the students check their scores with the correct score. Discussion will take into account both skills-centred issues and person-centred issues. Further discussion can take place after the group members have checked their personal scores with those of the group and the correct score.

REFERENCES

Miles (1969). Learning Discussion Skills through Games. (out of print)

Marzillier, D Trower, Bryant and Argyle (1978). Social Skills and Mental Health. Methuen.

Philip, A (1984). Group Discussion: Its importance and its assessment. Teaching English, pp 9-19, Autumn Vol 18 No 1.

RESOURCES FOR DISCUSSION

The following texts have been found helpful in the design of discussion programmes.

1)	Bindley & Griffiths (1976)	Listening & Speaking, NARE, 4 Oldcroft Road, Walton on the Hill, Stafford.
2)	Brooks & Friedrich (1973)	Teaching Speech Communication in the Secondary School. Houghton Mifflin.
3)	Krupar, K. (1973)	Communication Games. Free Press (Macmillan).
4)	Pfeiffer, W J & Jones, J.E. (1973 -)	Handbooks of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training. La Jolla, California University Associates.
5)	Priestley & McGuire et al (1978)	Social Skills & Personal Problem-Solving, Tavistock.
6)	McGuire, J & Priestley, P (1981)	Life After School. Pergamon.
7)	Brandes, D & Phillips, H (1978)	Gamesters Handbook. Hutchison.
8)	Schools Council 64. (1979)	Learning Through Talking 11-16 Evans/Methuen.
9)	Dearling, A & Armstrong, H	The Youth Games Book. I.T. Resource Centre, Quarrier's Homes, Bridge of Weir, Renfrewshire.
10)	Seely, J (1978)	In Role. Edward Arnold.
11)	Byrne, D & Rixon, S (1979)	Communication Games. NFER. ELT Guide 1.
12)	Prowse, P & Garton-Sprenger, J, Jupp, T C (1981)	Main Course English: Level 1 - Encounters Level 2 - Exchanges Level 3 - Advances
13)	Button, L (1974)	Developmental Group - Work with Adolescents. University of London Press.
14)	Jones, K (1980)	Simulations : A Handbook for Teachers. Kogan Page.
15)	Davison, A & Gordon P (1978)	Games & Simulations in Action. Woburn Press.

16) Lynch, M (1977) — It's Your Choice. Edward Arnold.

17) Harnishfeger — Basic Practice in Listening. Love.

18) Concept 7-9 — Communication. Edward Arnold.

The following resources are oriented more towards the principles of classroom discussion with examples of various projects:

1) Sutton, Clive (Ed.) (1981) — Communicating in the Classroom. Hodder & Stoughton.

2) Barnes, Douglas; Todd, Frankie (1977) — Communication & Learning in Small Groups. Routledge & Kegan Paul.

3) Lorac, Carol; Weiss, Michael (1981) — Communication & Social Skills. Schools Council Publications

4) Elliott, John; MacDonald, Barry (1975) — People in Classrooms. UEA Occasional Publications No.2. (Out of print, but available in Moray House Library).

5) Jacques, D. (1985) — Learning in Groups. Croom Helm.

UNDERSTANDING THE SILENT MEMBER OF THE GROUP

Students who participate in discussion groups show little concern for the silent member of the group. School unfortunately may be perceived as being about the survival of the fittest, about finding one's place, about rivalry, about competition. The silent member is useful, he provides none of these things therefore he need not be granted much consideration, he can be allowed to be silent. These feelings of comfort are further enhanced if the silent member in discussion is known to have the normal friendship patterns and to cope well with activities not based on oral contributions. Pupils accept that some people talk and others do not - the blackness and the whiteness of it all appeals to them.

There is nothing however which disturbs a teacher more than a silent member in a class group. He can trigger the teacher's own feelings of inadequacy in group situations, memories of the teacher's own participation in the staff group, memories of being a student challenged by a tutor. Teachers cope with these powerful feelings in different ways. Some become angry, they wish the silent member to fight against the problem, to overcome it, to take it by the scruff of its neck and get rid of it. Others get angry with themselves, it reveals their own lack of self-confidence in failing to uphold the principles of education, the drawing out of every student's creative potential. It reveals feelings of inadequacy concerning their lack of training in adopting appropriate strategies in the classroom which will involve all the students all the time. Others simply ignore the problem, hoping it will go away. Next year there will be a new class, a new teacher, perhaps that will resolve the problem. The student will be one year older, perhaps maturation is the answer.

It is difficult for teachers to cope when they are locked into such difficult feelings. When one is unable to understand the basis of one's own irrational feelings, it is unlikely that one can rationally examine how much of oneself is projected into the situation to exacerbate the problem. Coping with the silent member can only be achieved by an exploration of these feelings with teachers facing similar problems in the kind of group described in this report. Coping requires motivation and perception and until teachers realise that the silent member's problem is also their problem not much progress can be achieved.

If we are optimistic and suppose that the teacher has arrived at the position of coping with the silent member, freed from feelings of guilt or inadequacy, how should we explain the silent student's dilemma?

He has made several assumptions before arriving in his present situation. He assumes that he is less articulate than his peers, that they have more to say and are more effective at saying it. He assumes that on this evidence he has more to gain by being silent than by speaking - disturbing the status quo is not something he is enthusiastic about.

He assumes that the teacher is only acting out of a sense of duty when he is asked to speak. The teacher is obviously more interested in the opinions of the articulate members of the group and gives them more practice at refining their intervention skills.

The silent student's interpretation of the situation is however only based on inferences derived from a problematical situation, it is not based on fact. Some of the facts might be these. Which student profile fits the silent member of your discussion group?

STUDENT 1

"I've always been young for my class. I suppose I was rather immature when I went to school. I was always a bit slower than the rest - when we learned new things in Maths for example. I usually got there in the end, but the teachers always tried to make me hurry up. They thought I was too slow and that I would fall behind later. The rest of the class began to accept that if you're a bit slow at one thing, you're a bit slow at everything. Now that we're having more discussions I find I'm just sitting back and letting the quicker ones take over, they've got used to it. I take things in much more slowly than them anyhow. The teacher says something and they've got to answer quick as a flash, takes me afew more seconds to realise what the question is and then there's no point in me trying to give the answer, they've got there before me. I'm not very good at remembering the thread of the argument actually. The teacher can say one thing and I think I've almost grasped it and then he follows it up with something else and I'm lost again ...."

STUDENT 2

"I've always been shy, I feel lost with so many people around. I remember hating school when I first started - everybody rushing around, knocking into you. We're a quiet family really, nobody talks much. I suppose now I'm older I would like to get out of myself a bit more, but I can't seem to do it. I get really worried if I think the teacher is going to ask me to speak - I can feel myself shaking. I hate discussion in class, I just sit there hoping no one will notice me. It's funny, I know they don't care, other kids I mean, but I always have this awful feeling that they're going to pounce on me and make me join in."

STUDENT 3

"Can never get anyone to listen to me can I, so I've just given up. All my life I've been saying things nobody agreed with. Take primary school - they used to go on at me about being cheeky, said I asked too many questions. Got sent out of the class for talking, locked in the store cupboard for talking, you name it, they certainly got the message across that they weren't interested in what I had to say. Now I'm in secondary they're always trying to get me to talk, but I've sussed them out, they only want you to say something so they have something to criticise. They use you as a sounding board for their own ideas. I don't believe in that. The other kids just go along with them, they don't seem to understand what they're up to. School's just manipulation, indoctrination.

These stereotyped student profiles illustrate the strands which need to be considered when working with the reticent student. Reticence may have its roots in delayed maturation or habit patterns of psychological or social functioning. The strands may show a dominant trend as in the examples quoted or may be an amalgamation of several strands. We are not describing

extreme behaviour, the withdrawn student, the disturbed student. Each of us should be able to identify with aspects of the problem. All the students described have insight about the origins of their difficulty and the hope that the difficulty can be solved.

For students who do not show insight into their communication difficulties and who are unable to talk about their feelings, person-centred programmes with an emphasis on the development of awareness and insight are recommended, managed by a Guidance teacher with counselling experience. The majority of students, however, will respond to a skills-centred programme, on the lines of the programme described in this report.

Footnote

A review of the literature on reticence and speech anxiety is available from the DDG.

THE ASSOCIATES' GROUP

Teachers who complete the college-based programme and go on to implement discussion programmes with colleagues and students, become 'associates' of the Discussion Development Group. This enables them to borrow the resources of the DDG as they are needed.

The college-based programme is offered three times a year on Wednesday from 4.30 - 6.00 pm. At present it is only available at Moray House but lecturers at Jordanhill, Aberdeen, Dundee and St. Andrew's Colleges of Education have expressed a willingness to undertake similar in-service training.

Reports of the associates' work in schools can be consulted at Moray House (St. John's Land, B.2A). There are examples of a staff development programme, a variety of student programmes, and data from student groups. Samples of two reports from the first project group are included here.

A series of video-recordings offers a visual record of some of the student groups. These are available to the network of lecturers, advisers and teacher associates for dissemination to colleagues.

ASSOCIATES' REPORTS

1. Small group discussion in English

Aim

To establish guidelines for tutor-group discussion: SIII and IV on English texts.

Objectives

1) To manage small groups of six pupils discussing simultaneously.

2) To familiarise the pupils with the roles of leader and participant observer.

3) To monitor the effectiveness of

   (a) the teacher

   (b) the pupil

   in discussion group management.

4) To provide opportunities for pupils' self-assessment of their own contributions to group discussion.

5) To monitor the pupils' achievement in relation to the content of the discussion.

Report

We have determined that the group discussion be a staple feature of work in the Foundation Course. By this I mean small groups of pupils

(4-5) participating in a structured discussion with objectives varying from the very specific to the fairly specific. The latter constraint is in recognition of the newness of this activity for many of these pupils.

Inevitably we have recognised the implications for SI and SII of changes and innovation in SIII curriculum and assessment. As far as Oral work is concerned there has been a recognition that if group discussion is to be a regular activity in SIII and SIV then logically it must be introduced in SI. To this end the group discussion will become a regular activity in SI and SII. The three stages of development which you ouline would accord very much with our own thinking.

Assessment, both formative and summative, is clearly the key to the successful teaching of these skills. We have recognised the difficulties inherent in the teacher trying to record objectively pupils' performances in the group discussion as they occur. This is possible in certain activities when the teacher is a detached observer within the class - for example, the follow-up discussions to talks and debates. For this purpose we have devised a profile - 'Communication Skills Profile' - enclosed.

However, when 4-6 different groups are engaged simultaneously in group discussions it becomes much harder to be both objective and comprehensive in assessment - particularly as this activity (the 'SD') often directly <u>involves</u> the teacher.

We decided therefore to rely on self and peer assessment, coupled with teacher observations. You will see from the enclosed 'Discussion Skills Questionnaire' that the self and peer assessments act as cross-checks for one another.

Trials so far have been encouraging and pupils are clearly becoming more aware of the <u>process</u> of group discussion as a set of skills which have to be acquired.

To date we've only tried the questionnaire with SIII ('F') but intend in June (post exams) to test it extensively in SI and SII. The aim would be to evolve a standard questionnaire used throughout the 4 years with which pupils become thoroughly familiar in S1.

This uniformity would, it is hoped, breed an awareness that discussion skills are skills that have to be developed every bit as much as writing or reading skills.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS PROFILE

PUPIL'S NAME: CLASS:

1. Talking to the Teacher (hobbies, interests, books read). At least one example should be tape-recorded. Assessment date:

Does the pupil:		Comment (if required)
1. Show a knowledge of his subject?	YES/NO	
2. Show a feeling for his subject?	YES/NO	
3. Organise his talk?	YES/NO	
4. Express himself well (vocabulary, register, delivery?)	YES/NO	
5. Listen and respond to questions?	YES/NO	

2. Talking to the Group (hobbies, interests) Assessment date:

Does the pupil:		Comment (if required)
1. Show a knowledge of his subject?	YES/NO	
2. Show a feeling for his subject?	YES/NO	
3. Organise his talk?	YES/NO	
4. Express himself well (vocabulary, register, delivery)?	YES/NO	
5. Listen and respond to questions?	YES/NO	
6. Cope with being 'on the spot'?	YES/NO	
7. Entertain his audience?	YES/NO	

3. Balloon Debate Assessment date:

Comment on pupil's:	Comment (if required)
1. Preparation .... FULL/INADEQUATE	
2. Strength of case .... STRONG/WEAK	
3. Organisation .... WELL ORGANISED/DISORGANISED	
4. Powers of persuasion .... CONVINCING/WEAK	
5. Entertainment value ....STRONG/WEAK	

6. Dealing with opposition..COPES WELL/GIVES IN

7. Listening and responding to questions ..... SOUND/SUSPECT

4. Picture/Object Games — Assessment date:

At least one example should be tape-recorded, with pupil as both addressor and addressee.

(a) Pupil as addressor

Does the pupil convey the necessary information:		Comment (if required)
1. accurately?	YES/NO	
2. in appropriate detail?	YES/NO	

(b) upil as addressee

1. Does the pupil demonstrate effective listening by satisfactorily completing task?	YES/NO
2. Does he (where necessary) effectively seek confirmation/ clarification of information?	YES/NO

5. Phone Calls — Assessment date:

At least one example should be tape-recorded.

Does the pupil give information		Comment (if required)
1. clearly and distinctly?	YES/NO	
2. logically and coherently?	YES/NO	

6. Relaying Information — Assessment date:

At least one example should be tape-recorded.		Comment (if required)
1. Has the pupil made notes while listening?	YES/NO	
2. Are these notes, in the main, relevant/helpful to the task?	YES/NO	
3. Is the 'relay', in the main, relevant to the instructions the pupil was given? (i.e. Has he done what he was asked to do?)	YES/NO	

4. Is the relayed information accurate where:

   a. names and places are involved? YES/NO

   b. times and dates are involved? YES/NO

   c. figures/quantities are involved? YES/NO

   d. order of items is concerned? YES/NO

5. Is the delivery of the relay:

   a. clear and distinct? YES/NO

   b. appropriate in register? YES/NO

   c. fluent? YES/NO

   d. appropriate in tone? YES/NO

7. Imaginative Stimuli — Assessment date:

If pupil's responses are to be oral at least one example should be tape-recorded.

In his oral or written responses to the questions has the pupil:		Comment (if required)
1. picked up clues/hints re character/ plot, etc.?	YES/NO	
2. 'caught' the essence of the piece?	YES/NO	
3. made sound judgements on character, motive, likely outcomes, etc.?	YES/NO	
4. sensed tone, atmosphere, feeling?	YES/NO	
5. responded to, been moved by, the piece?	YES/NO	

John Broadfoot (1982)

GROUP DISCUSSION: ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME: CLASS: DATE:

SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION:

GROUP MEMBERS:

SECTION A: ASSESSING YOURSELF

Answer each of the 20 questions which follow, simply by circling YES or NO. Be honest with yourself.

1. I spoke a lot in this week's discussion. YES/NO
2. I spoke a fair amount. YES/NO
3. I spoke only occasionally. YES/NO
4. I didn't speak once. YES/NO
5. I introduced some new ideas into the discussion. YES/NO
6. I spoke only when I had to. YES/NO
7. I spoke to agree with others. YES/NO
8. I spoke to disagree with others. YES/NO
9. When I spoke I sometimes made a long speech as well as shorter comments. YES/NO
10. When I spoke it was always briefly but usually to the point. YES/NO
11. When I spoke I only used words like 'Yes', 'No', 'Don't know'. YES/NO
12. When I spoke it was easy to say what I meant. YES/NO
13. When I spoke it was quite difficult to say what I meant. YES/NO
14. I listened well to others and could always follow the discussion. YES/NO
15. Sometimes I stopped listening because my mind wandered. YES/NO
16. Sometimes I stopped listening because I was too busy thinking about what I was going to say next. YES/NO
17. Sometimes I interrupted others because I hadn't been listening to what they were saying. YES/NO
18. I enjoyed the group discussion this week. YES/NO

19. The group discussion went well. YES/NO

20. The group discussion was the same/worse/better than the one I was in last time. (CIRCLE)

If there is anything else about this week's group discussion which you'd like to mention, write it in the space below.

SECTION B: ASSESSING YOUR GROUP

Complete the following sentences by writing in the appropriate names of members of your group. If any sentence does not apply to your group, leave it blank. Again, be honest.

1. In my group this week those who talked most were: (give first names only).
2. Those who talked least were:
3. The person who turned out as kind of leader of the group was:
4. Those who were good at introducing new ideas into the discussion were:
5. Those who spoke only when they had to were:
6. Those who didn't say much but always to the point were:
7. Those who didn't say anything were:
8. Those who talked too much and not always to the point were:
9. Those who spoke clearly were:
10. Those who mumbled were:
11. Those who could explain ideas well were:
12. Those who found it difficult to explain things clearly were:
13. Those who really listened to others in the group were:
14. Those who tended not to listen but either daydreamed or interrupted were:

Now get back into your group and compare your answers.

John Broadfoot (1982)

2. A Comparative Study of Two Discussion Groups in Modern Studies

Composition of Groups

Group 1: 12 boys all doing CSE Modern Studies. Many of the boys could have been in an O-grade class but it was felt that since their chances were borderline, they should be placed in a CSE class. Five of these pupils gained a Band 1 at CSE. The boys had been in the same Modern Studies class since October 1980 and had had the same teacher for that period of time. Two boys joined the class in the Autumn term of 1981 and one of them left at the end of the Spring term 1982. The boys displayed a mixture of personalities and characteristics and ranged from the reserved to the extrovert. None of them exhibited any discipline problems and by the commencement of the project the relationship between pupil and pupil and between pupil and teacher was a disciplined yet relaxed one.

Group 2: 9 pupils - 5 boys and 4 girls who were also in a CSE Modern Studies class. The class was originally larger but lost pupils at the end of the Autumn term 1981. Apart from the obvious difference in composition, this class differed also in ability and in behaviour. The ability of the class ranged from CSE to non-certificate. Their behaviour also caused some problems and they were not as motivated as Group 1. The class had been together since August 1980 but had changed quite drastically in composition because of leavers, and had had a change of teachers in June 1981. The relationship certainly between pupils and teacher was therefore more formal and less relaxed than in Group 1. The relationships between pupil and pupil also differed in that there was a variety of maturity in the group and one boy in particular was treated very badly by his peers - verbally that is!

Methods

1) Each pupil filled in a questionnaire to begin with. It was surprising that few of them had ever taken part in discussions. (See Appendix 1).

2) Group discussions on certain topics were undertaken. We began by looking at rules and regulations in the school since most of our work was to be concentrated around a series of Law Cases. Some of these discussions were taped.

3) Small group discussions played a large part. The group was divided into different smaller groups and each one was given a case study. It was then their responsibility to organise themselves and to discuss the facts of the case and finally to come to a decision. Groups were organised in two ways:

   (a) pupils chose their groups;

   (b) teacher chose the groups.

   Each group had a tape recorder and taped all their work. The played no part in these discussions.

4) Feedback came from basically two methods:

(a) by listening to the tape and discussing what WE as a group considered to be the good and the bad points. From there we could plan how we could build on the good points and rectify the bad points;

(b) each pupil at the end of a session was asked to write down what he had felt about the work of the group in terms of what was good and bad about the session.

Progress

Neither group completed the whole task. The development of discussion skills is obviously an on-going process but each group did make advances. Each group, however, did not make equal advances. Group 1 advanced through the large discussion group, to the small discussion groups and from there reached the stage of having recognised specific problem areas and how to deal with them. This group provided tape material and paid two visits to Moray House College of Education; on one occasion to be video-recorded by Mrs Francis and a more informal situation. This group has made real tangible progress. The relationships both between pupil and pupil and pupil and teacher have been strengthened.

Group 2 did not advance beyond the initial stages. There are a variety of reasons for this. The group was never as stable as Group 1 in terms of composition, attendance and motivation. They exhibited quite pronounced discipline problems which made it more difficult to work with them. They also appeared to lack the maturity of Group 1. At the same time, it must be said that there was some development in the group in that all of them contributed and it was more pronounced in this group that certain members who had been considered as 'followers' actually became "leaders" and vice-versa. One member of the group steadfastly refused to participate while the tape recorder was on. The two groups were distinctly different in their reaction to being taped. Group 1, apart from initial reactions, displayed few inhibitions; Group 2 disliked it and consequently reacted in what can only be described as a childish manner to it.

Skills Developed

Group 1 in particular recognised a variety of skills which they did not have and together we devised methods to try and develop these deficiencies. Below are examples of how some of these problems were recognised and dealt with.

1) Too many people speaking at once: this was recognised by listening to the tape. The important fact is that it was recognised by the pupils themselves. Various solutions were put forward but before we discussed these the boys verified the fact by listening to the tape and noting down the names of those who spoke. It was difficult to keep up with them! Solutions ranged from someone pointing to people to using the microphone by picking it up when you wanted to contribute.

2) Too many topics coming forward at once and no one building on them.

This point was much more important when we worked in the large group and of less importance in the small groups where there was a very specific task and generally only 4 people and 4 'district' people to represent. This particular problem was worked on when we visited Moray House on the second occasion. Using an example from a book (now out of print) we tried to develop not only point (1) but also point (2) by laying down very strict conditions such as once you have contributed you may not contribute again until everyone has and once you have contributed, the next person to speak must build on your contribution.

3) Non Contribution

Some people obviously found it difficult to contribute and the group recognised this. This can be solved by the group asking the non-contributor about his or her opinion.

4) This can be linked to the idea of people not contributing because they agree with what was said. Many pupils labour under misconceptions that either they cannot contribute because they agree or they cannot contribute because they do not agree, for example, "The Use of Force in the Falklands Crisis is Wrong" brought forth the response, "I cannot take part because I do not agree with this."

Pupils also began to see here in particular that the use of non-verbal responses is important and can encourage other members.

5) Listening: all of us agreed that we do not listen carefully enough to what people are saying and this often leads to difficulties. This can be developed through the use of examples such as those used in (2).

It was at this point that my work with the two groups concluded as the groups have changed in composition, mainly through pupils leaving school.

Conclusions

1) All pupils can take part in discussions but the following points must be noted.

   a) The group needs time to become cohesive: to get to know one another and ot learn to trust one another. By and large both groups achieved this.

   b) Individuals can recognise what skills they do NOT have and can often see how to acquire them. It is the acquisition and development of these skills which is important.

   c) Individuals can learn these skills in two ways:

      i) experientially - by working as a group;

ii) by example - by watching other groups. This was in evidence in the video tape made in the studio when in the second small group, a leader emerged who had never undertaken this role before.

Although we did little of this, this can be developed by deliberately giving a pupil a different role. For example, a dominant leader can be made an observer for one piece of work.

2) It has become clear that many teachers do not really DISCUSS when they are having a discussion with a class.

3) The PROCESS SKILLS involved in discussion are obviously of importance and they should be emphasised much more.

Alison McKinley (1982)

APPENDIX ONE

Answer the following questions:

1) Have you ever been a member of a discussion group? Yes/No

2) In which subject?

3) Do you enjoy talking/discussing questions? Yes/No

4) Do you think everyone will participate? Yes/No

5) Who do you think might be:

   a) Leader

   b) Totally silent

   c) Annoying

   d) Unco-operative

   e) Too talkative

6) Look at the following and say whether you think they are TRUE (T) or FALSE (F) in your case.

   a) It doesn't make any difference if I say anything or not because I never contribute anything original.

   b) While the others can state their ideas so much clearer than I can, I would rather just sit back and listen.

   c) I just like to hear what other people have to say about these things.

   d) Well, I never talk much.

   e) I just don't like to talk when X is around.

   f) I'm afraid that everyone will think that what I have to say is stupid.

   g) I've not got many views about the things we discuss.

   h) Discussions are pointless. Nobody really knows what they are talking about.

7) Would you like the teacher to take part? Yes/No

8) Would you find the teacher

   a) Helpful

   b) Embarrassing/off-putting

   c) Distracting

9) Do you prefer to answer in the form of:

a) Speaking

b) Writing

RESULTS

1) Majority said NO - except English-Social Education

3) Majority said YES

4) Majority said No

5) Results showed pupils to be perceptive about the roles of their peers and indicates how well the group knew each other.

6) This was designed to give pupils a chance to voice their feelings. When the questionnaire was filled in at the end of the work, some had changed their minds.

7) The majority preferred the teacher present, and thought it helpful.

8) Most prefer to speak rather than write.

THE DDG NETWORK

The DDG in its endeavour to increase the possibilities of the use of discussion in schools has encouraged a networking effect to reach as wide a group of interested people as possible.

This at present involves the following links.

Within Moray House College

Allison Long	Home Economics
Pat Mowat	Modern Studies Department
*Norman Thompson	Geography Department
Jim Wright	Department of Educational Management

Inter College

Jordanhill	Jim Rand - In-service Department
	*Haydon Davies - Department of Drama
St. Andrews	Andrew Philp - English Department
	Jim McGonigal - English Department
	Jim O'Brien - Lecturer in Guidance
	Reg Wilson - Department of Educational Sciences
Aberdeen	David Northcroft - English Department
	Terry Ashton - Guidance and Counselling
Dundee	Martin Williams - Guidance and Counselling

Advisers

Lothian Region	*Roy Wilsher - Modern Studies
	*Mary Karus - English
Central Region	Fiona McLeod. Learning Support Services
Strathclyde Region	Michael Burke - Modern Studies
	*George Arthur - English
	Bob Cowan - Guidance, Renfrew Division
Fife Region	Elizabeth Shepherd - Special Educational Needs

HMI's

Russell Dick	
Ian Robertson	S.E.D. - Research & Intelligence Unit
*Neil Robertson	

Advisory Committee

In addition to those marked with *

Dr. Sally Brown	Stirling University - Department of Education
Dr. Alex Sharp	Edinburgh University - Department of Education

Teachers, Associates of DDG

Those marked with * are also on Advisory Committee

DISCUSSION DEVELOPMENT GROUP

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Don Cole	Ainslie Park	PT Remedial
Dorothy Crowther	Ainslie Park	English
Louise Lamont	Ainslie Park	Maths
Colin Hutchison	Balerno	Guidance
Brian McKerchar	Balerno	Chemistry
David Griffiths	Boroughmuir	PT Modern Studies
Jill Duffield	Broughton	Modern Studies
Gus Mackenzie	Craigmount	Modern Studies
Hilary Neilson	Craigmount	Modern Studies
Brian Gannon	Gillespies	Modern Studies
Ailsa Gray	Gillespies	Home Economics
Paul Hutchison	Gillespies	Modern Studies
*Tom Johnson	Gillespies	PT Modern Studies
John Swinbourne	Gillespies	Modern Studies
Bill Gibbons	Drummond	English
Gordon Laurie	Portobello	Modern Studies
Jennifer Thomson	Peebles	Home Economics
Alison McKinlay	Musselburgh	Asst. HT
John Broadfoot	Preston Lodge	PT English
Archie Foley	Ross High	Modern Studies
Nan McFarlane	Fallin Primary (Stirling)	Primary 3
Janet Benvie	WHEC	English
*Roz Hunter	WHEC	LSS
Lynne Pratt	WHEC	English
Cathy Ritchie	WHEC	English
John Young	WHEC	English
David Chalmers	CDO/West Calder HS	History
Liz Herd	West Calder	English
Susan Forde	Musselburgh	English
Lyn Merritt	Linlithgow Academy	PT Home Economics
Vera Turnbull	James Young High School	Home Economics
Ewan Henderson	North Berwick	PT English
Tim Wright	Beeslack High School	PT Remedial
Sheila Wilson	Beeslack High School	PT English
Eleanor Fletcher	Woodland High School (Falkirk)	PT Home Economics
Kate Hart	(Base)Willowpark Special School	Home/Hospital Tutor
Jo Regan	Willowpark Special School	English
Jean Casey	Dunfermline High School	PT French
Barbara Cassidy	Inverkething High School	LSS English
Vicky Coalter	Inverkeithing High School	LSS English
John Brown	Dunbar Grammar	PT English
Anne Rigg	Leith Academy	APT English
Tony Hall	Leith Academy	APT Modern Studies
Sheila Paterson	Musselburgh Unit	Special Unit Teacher
Jack Mills	Beath High School (Fife)	TIC Special Unit